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BASIL I (867-886), THE FOUNDER OF THE MACEDONIAN DYNASTY: A STUDY OF THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY HISTORY OF THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE IN THE NINTH CENTURY

By NORMAN TOBIAS

A thesis submitted to
The Graduate School
of
Rutgers University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
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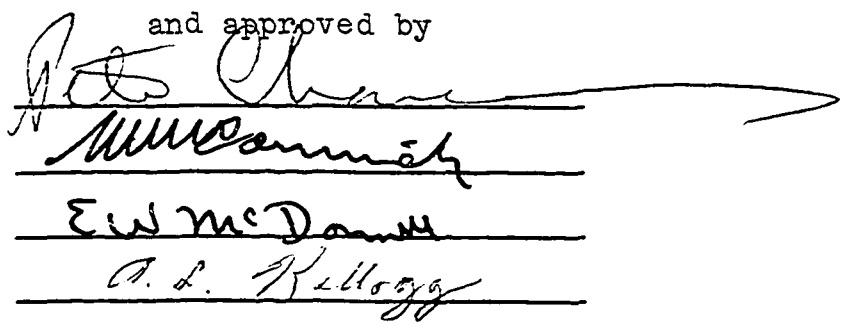
Written under the direction of
Professor Peter Charanis
of the Department of History
and approved by



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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Basil the First (867-886), the Founder of the Macedonian Dynasty: A Study of the Political and Military History of the Byzantine Empire in the Ninth Century

by NORMAN TOBIAS, Ph.D.

Thesis director: Professor Peter Charanis

Since the first monograph on Basil the First (867-886) was written in 1908 by Albert Vogt, a considerable amount of research has been undertaken by many international scholars. New sources, critical analyses of the character of the older sources, and new interpretations have revised and broadened the whole perspective of the ninth century, altering the traditional picture of Basil's place in history.

This dissertation has a twofold purpose: one, to provide a new synthesis of the founder of the Macedonian dynasty which is now long overdue; two, to fill in the deficiencies of Vogt's earlier study, especially the political and military career of the Emperor Basil.

To achieve my objective I have made a careful analysis of the relevant Greek, Latin, Armenian, Syriac, Hebrew, and Slavic sources as well as the secondary literature which has emerged in the last sixty years since Vogt's study.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
ABSTRACT		ii
PREFACE		iv
Chapter I.	THE ORIGIN AND BIRTH OF BASIL THE FIRST	1
II.	THE EARLY LIFE OF BASIL	51
III.	BASIL'S RISE TO POWER	94
IV.	THE EASTERN THEATER: BASIL'S WARS WITH THE PAULICIANS	157
V.	BASIL'S WARS WITH THE EASTERN ARABS 873-886: LAND AND NAVAL OPERATIONS	200
VI.	THE WESTERN THEATER: THE DALMATIAN AND ITALIAN CAMPAIGNS	261
VII.	BASIL AND THE SICILIAN WARS	342
VIII.	BASIL'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER PERIPHERAL STATES 867-886	383
IX.	BASIL'S INTERNAL POLICY	443
X.	THE CONCLUSION: THE DEATH OF BASIL AND HIS PLACE IN HISTORY	471
APPENDIX:	REPRESENTATIONS	481
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS		488
BIBLIOGRAPHY		491
VITA		525

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PREFACE

In 1908 the first monograph on the Emperor Basil the First (867-886) was written by the Byzantinist Albert Vogt. This study, entitled Basile I^{er}, empereur de Byzance et la civilisation byzantine à la fin du IX^{e} siècle, described the institutional, religious, and cultural history of the ninth century. As this has been the only monograph on the Emperor Basil, Vogt's book has since served as the standard reference for the founder of the Macedonian dynasty.

In the last sixty years, our understanding of the ninth century has been significantly altered and broadened by the illuminating studies of many international scholars. In the domain of administrative history, for instance, there are now the studies of J. B. Bury, H. Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, L. Bréhier, and R. Guilland.

The brilliant and stimulating studies of H. Grégoire have changed our perspective of the contributions of the Amorians, placing Basil's rise to power in a new light. In a similar manner F. Dvornik in his analytical study, The Photian Schism, has reinterpreted the religious problems which plagued the Empire. On the subject of Basil's early life, N. Adontz has added much information. More recently the chronological problems and legends which complicated the

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study of Basil's life and reign have also been clarified by such scholars as V. Grumel, F. Halkin, R. J. H. Jenkins, and G. Moravcsik, to mention only a few.

In the light of the many studies since Vogt's monograph, a re-examination of Basil's reign is now long overdue. This study has, therefore, endeavored to fill this need in two ways: first, by carefully examining the primary sources in view of recent studies in order to provide a synthesis of the research of the past sixty years; second, by filling in the deficiencies which still remain. For instance, in the areas of military and political history little exists outside of Vogt's curt treatment and A. A. Vasiliev's older study, Vizantija i Araby (1900-1902).

As in all works, however, many topics in this study have already been touched on by other scholars. To them I am greatly indebted. At the same time my conclusions are my own, especially in the area of the political and military history of Basil, where I place the emperor's reign in its proper perspective.

In conclusion I wish to express my most sincere appreciation to the faculty of the Department of History at Rutgers University, to Professor E. W. McDonnell, and especially to Professor Peter Charanis, who started me on this road and guided my first steps.

Norman Tobias

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CHAPTER I

THE ORIGIN AND BIRTH OF BASIL THE FIRST

On September 24, 867 A.D.[1] at St. Mamas, a suburban imperial palace across the Golden Horn, a group of Armenian conspirators stole quietly into the imperial bed-chamber where the Emperor Michael III, stupefied with wine, lay asleep and promptly dispatched him. The mastermind of this crime was his co-Emperor, Basil the Macedonian, who owed everything including his position to the murdered sovereign. Fear of losing his recently acquired position to a possible rival coupled with an insatiable ambition compelled Basil to consummate this atrocity against his benefactor. With blood-stained hands he attained the pinnacle of his mortal ambition and established one of the most distinguished dynasties in Byzantine history.

Prior to this event little can be said with certainty concerning the career of Basil. His early years are entangled in a labyrinth of legends and myths conceived by his grandson, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and the court

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[1] Theophanes Continuatus, Chronographia, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, CSBH, 1838), p. 210, 44, 11: "μηνὶ Σεπτεμβρίῳ, εἰκάδι τετάρτῃ, ἰνδικτιῶνος πρώτης,"

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historians.[2] Even his origin and birth are subjects of debate.

The main difficulty lies in the contradictory nature of the evidence found in the sources. For instance, both Byzantine and Armenian sources are in accord over Basil's Armenian ancestry, but there is considerable disagreement over his lineage, especially by Byzantine authors. On the one hand, the court historians of the tenth century maintain Basil's royal origin from the Arsacids; but later, derivative Byzantine authors give more humble origins. The Arab historians and writers add more fuel to this controversy by not only being divided over his royal lineage but by asserting, directly or indirectly, that Basil was a Slav. Historians have, therefore, found ample opportunity for unraveling this entangled question according to preconceived opinions.

In order to dissipate some of the perplexities associated with Basil's origin and birth, it will perhaps be beneficial to present, first, the divergent views which have found expression in historiography and then to discuss the evidence of the sources.

The Origin of Basil: The Historiography

Prior to the advent of nationalism, modern historians viewed the problem of national or ethnic origin disdainfully, treating the subject in a perfunctory manner or, at best,

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[2] G. Moravcsik, "Sagen und Legenden über Kaiser Basileios I," D.O.P., 15 (1961), 61-126. (This is the most recent study to examine the legends connected with Basil.)

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with a disparaging consideration. They weighed Basil's origin with relative indifference.

Even the immortal work of Charles Du Fresne Du Cange, Familiae Byzantinae (1680) reflects this general tendency. Du Cange was totally silent concerning Basil's ethnic origin, although he nowhere excluded the possibility of his Armenian nationality. With regard to his lineage, Du Cange believed that he was of humble origin and rejected the emperor's royal genealogy as a Photian forgery.[3] The Annales Ecclesiastici (1685) of the prolific Church historian, Cardinal Baronius, arrived at precisely the same opinion, as his words clearly show:

> Therefore, when Michael was dead, Basil, who ruled with him previously as a colleague, assumed the sole rule. He was a Macedonian of obscure or base origin, even if some have written in flattery that he was descended from the ancient lineage of the Arsacids.[4]

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[3] C. Du Cange, Historia byzantina duplici commentario illustrata: Familiae Byzantinae (2d ed., Venice, 1729), p. 138: "Et si Basilium ad supremam, quam adeptus est, dignitatem unica eduxerit fortuna, non vero parentum aut familiae splendor, cum ex infimo ortum genere consentiant scriptores fere omnes [refers to Nicetas, Liudprand, and Zonaras]: non defuere tamen qui Augusti donatum titulo, quo Principis virtutem ac praeclaras dotes commendarent, majoremque auctoritatem conciliarent imperanti, imaginariam quandam a Tyridate Armeniorum Rege arcersivere nobilitatem, qua tum ipse, tum posteri adeo sunt deliniti, ut tanquam veram ac legitimam haud aegre amplexi sint. Fictitii istius stemmatis Photium Patriarcham auctorem suisse aiunt; quod ille digesserit in Basilii favorem, cuius demereri gratiam avebat."

[4] C. Baronius, Annales Ecclesiastici (Coloniae Agrippinae, 1685), Tomus X, p. 370: "Extincto itaque Michaele Imperatore, Basilius ab eo antea in collegam assumptus solus imperat. Fuit Macedo genere ignobile, licet ex Arsacidarum, antiqua stirpe progenitum adulantes alii prodiderunt." Elsewhere he also discusses the Photian forgery (p. 527).

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These two early scholars were led to these conclusions by their interpretation of the sources, especially the remarks which are found in the works of Nicetas of Paphlagonia and Liudprand of Cremona. Somewhat later a noted scholar, the Orientalist Michael Le Quien, arrived at this same conclusion in his invaluable study, Oriens Christianus (1740). His evidence was a later fourteenth-century source which vividly relates how Gregory of Syracuse on his deathbed confessed the whole Photian forgery to a priest who in turn informed the Patriarch Ignatius.[5] In a similar manner, Charles Le Beau, in his monumental history of the Later Roman Empire (1757-1786), also rejected the royal genealogy of Basil, but he too came to no conclusions as to his ethnic origin.[6]

Edward Gibbon, on the other hand, in his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1776-1788) accepted the court

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[5]M. Le Quien, Oriens Christianus (Paris, 1740), I, 381-82: "Narrat Palaestrius monachus apud Georgium Metochitam in Ecthesi historica et canonica Octavae Synode, Gregorium Syracusanum, qui toties ab Ecclesia diris devotus fuit, moribundo ore retulisse sacerdoti cui peccata sua confitebatur, se illa omnia declarasse, quae Photius una cum Theophane commentus erat circa vocem Beclas, qua fabula Basilii ex Tiridate rege progeniti efferebatur; sacerdotum vero confessionis exceptorem ea detulisse Ignatio, qui hunc sacerdotii gradu amovit, quod sola confessione sacra acceptam aperuisset."

[6]C. Le Beau, Histoire du Bas-Empire, ed. S. Martin (Paris, 1832), XIII, 180-82: "Il était né sous le règne de Michael Rhangabé, de parents pauvres, qui gagnaient leur vie du travail de leurs mains dans une bourgade voisine d'Adrianople. . . . Lorsque Basile fut empereur, on lui forgea une généalogie qui faisant descendre son père des Arsacides, et sa mère de Constantin-le-Grand. . . . Ces fables, adoptées par plusieurs historiens . . . était de l'invention de Photius."

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historians' account of Basil's ancestry but with a certain reluctance, as can be seen in his words: "The genealogy of Basil the Macedonian (if it be not the spurious offspring of pride and flattery) exhibits a genuine picture of the revolution of the most illustrious families."[7]

These were the opinions expressed by scholars until J. Reiskii's commentary (1754) on the De Ceremoniis of Constantine Porphyrogenitus popularized the account of the Arabic historian Hamza Ispahenensis, according to which the death of Michael III brought to the imperial power Basil, a man of Slavic origin.[8] Although Reiskii himself had doubts about the reliability of Hamza as a source on this subject, he nevertheless influenced other scholars in two ways:[9] some uncritically added the arguments of Hamza to other Arabic authorities without trying to determine what the Arabs meant by the word "Slav"; others erroneously believed that Reiskii's commentary also supported Basil's Slavic origin. Few, if any, paid much attention to what the Orientalist

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[7] E. Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ed. J. B. Bury (London, 1914), V, 215.

[8] C. Porphyrogenitus, De Ceremoniis, ed. J. Reiskii (Bonn, CSHB, 1829), II, 451. Here is his Latin translation of the Arabic text: "Deinde Michael, eius filius, cum matre in diebus Almoctaderi usque ad vigesimum octavum aetatis suae annum; deinde translatum fuit imperium ex hoc gente in gentem Sclavorum. Nam Basilius Sclavus in diebus Almotazzi, anno [A.H.] 253 occidebat eum, et regnabat per 20 annos."

[9] Ibid.: "Quae incondita, turbida, chronologiae veritatique et sibi repugnantia narrat Persa, facile erit historiae Graecae peritis componere et expediere."

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D'Herbelot said in his Bibliotheque Orientale (1776):

> Oriental historians refer to a person as a Slav . . . if he was born in Thrace or in the region which is directly North of Greece. In this respect Basil the Macedonian was called by them Basilious al-Seclabi.[10]

In the nineteenth century several different schools of opinion concerning Basil's origin emerged, but all, without exception, treated the subject in a general rather than in a specialized fashion. One group of historians merely avoided the whole issue or, when compelled to venture an opinion, called him simply a Macedonian.

Chronologically the first among these scholars was the German F. Schlosser, whose study was influenced by Reiskii's scepticism of Hamza's statement. Regardless of this knowledge, Schlosser refused to express any opinion concerning Basil's origin other than to make the erroneous statement that he was born in the vicinity of Thessalonika.[11] The same may be said of T. L. F. Tafel, who seemingly cited all the known Greek sources on this subject in 1846 but failed to

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[10] D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale (Maestricht, 1776), p. 776, paraphrased from the following quote: "Les Historiens orientaux nomment ansi un Esclavon, qui a pris naissance, non pas dans ces pays du Nord, dont l'on vient de parler dans le terre précédent, mais dans celui que nous appellons aujourd'hui l'Esclavonie et la Bulgarie, qui sont la Moesie des Anciens, et ils étendent même ce nom jusques à la Thrace, et aux pays les plus Septrentrionnaux de la Grece. C'est ce qui fait qu'ils appellent dans leurs Histories l'Empereur Basile le Macédonien, Basilious al-Seclabi."

[11] F. Schlosser, Geschichte der bilderstürmenden Kaiser (Frankfurt am Main, 1812), pp. 630-31: "Wer die Stelle des Hamzes ben Reiske comment. ad Caeremon. aulae Byzantinae Tom. II. p. 142 selbst nachlieset wird finden, dass man unmöglich dem späterm und seichten Hamzas glauben kann, dass Basil ein Schlave war. Er war übrigens 813 in der Nähe von Thessalonich gebohren worden."

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express any opinion of his own.[12] On the other hand, Cardinal Hergenröther's study of the Patriarch Photius devoted to this problem considerable attention and gave a thorough analysis of the sources; however, he refused to commit himself to a definite opinion.[13] The Greek historian K. Paparrigopoulo, author of the monumental History of the Greek People, denies that Basil was an Arsacid but simply states that he was born near Adrianople.[14] Karl von Hefele somewhat disparagingly asserted that Basil was a Macedonian of humble extraction born near Adrianople.[15]

A second school, strongly influenced by Arabic sources, maintained Basil's Slavic ancestry. Among this group was the noted English Byzantinist George Finlay, who was especially swayed by the opinion of Hamza. In his History of the Byzantine and Greek Empires from 716 to 1453 (1859), he wrote:

> The history of Basil I has been transmitted to us by writers who compiled their work under the eye of his grandson, the Emperor Constantine VII., and by that grandson with his own pen. Under such auspices, history is more likely to conceal than to divulge the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. One instance of falsification may be mentioned. The imperial compilations

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[12] T. L. F. Tafel, Constantinus Porphyrogenitus: De provinciis regni Byzantini (Tubingae, 1846), p. xxxii.

[13] J. Hergenröther, Photius, Patriarch von Constantinopel: Sein Leben, seine Schriften und das griechische Schisma (Regensburg, 1867), II, 258-62, 580-81.

[14] K. Paparrigopoulo, History of the Greek People from Most Ancient Times to Recent Years (Athens, 1867), III, 833. (In Greek.)

[15] K. J. von Hefele, Histoire des Conciles, ed. C. Leclercq (Paris, 1911), IV, Part I, 443.

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> would fain persuade us that the Sclavonian groom was a man of noble descent, and that he could trace that descent either through a line of paternal or maternal ancestors to Constantine to the Arsacidae and to Alexander the Great. Yet they allow that his father labored as a poor peasant in the neighborhood of Adrianople, until Basil himself, despising the cultivation of the paternal farm, sought to improve his fortune by wandering to the Capital. We are told by other authorities that Basil was a Sclavonian and we know that the whole of Thrace and Macedonia was at this period cultivated by Sclavonian colonists.[16]

Finlay was hardly alone in this opinion. One of the most erudite scholars of Byzantine history in the nineteenth century was the German Karl Hopf (1823-1873), whose works became standard references for the study of medieval Greece. Like Finlay, Hopf also believed that the Emperor Basil was of Slavic ancestry, as can be inferred from a remark comparing him with the Emperor Justinian I: "The christianization of the Slavs was consummated under the Emperor Basil I who himself was a Macedonian Slav, like Justinian I."[17] The difficulty of Hopf's style narrowly restricted the appeal of his works. Nevertheless, the results of his research did have a paramount influence on scholarship, for G. Hertzberg's Geschichte der Byzantiner und des Osmanischen Reiches (1883)

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[16] G. Finlay, History of the Byzantine and Greek Empires from 716 to 1453 (London, 1854), p. 271. Finlay in his note mentions Hamza as a source for Basil's Slavic origin, and is one of the historians who apparently misinterpreted Reiskii on this subject. In addition, he also mentions the expression in Genesius, κατὰ ποδαρον, as proof of Basil's Slavic origin.

[17] K. Hopf, Griechische Geschichte (Leipzig, 1867), p. 54: "Diese christianisirung der Slawen Vollendete sich unter Kaiser Basilius I, der selbst ein makedonischer Slawe, wie Justinian I."

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introduced many of his opinions to a wider audience through his easier style.[18]

Noticeably, the foremost advocates of Basil's Slavic origin were scholars of Slavic ancestry themselves. Spurred by their national awakening in the nineteenth century, these historians relied on Arabic authorities for their interpretations and few, if any, allowed empirical methods to overcome their national pride. Even the Czech antiquarian P. Safarik could not escape this trend, and asserted that Basil was a Slav wholly on the evidence of Hamza Isaphenensis.[19]

Historians who either lived or wrote in nineteenth-century Russia gave their unquestioned support, on the whole, to this school as well. For instance, the German P. Krug, Kachenovski, Chertkov, Hilferdering, Khomiakov, Drinov, and Irechek all supported Basil's Slavic ancestry. The only exception among them was Morgenstern, who doubted the validity of the Arabic authorities.[20]

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[18] G. F. Hertzberg, Geschichte der Byzantiner und des osmanischen Reiches (Berlin, 1883), p. 146: "Kaiser Michael III hatte seit längeren zeit seine volle Kunst den Manne geschentt der schliesslich wider ihn die morderische hand erheben sollte, dem eben genannten Basilios. Dieser letztere war gegen 813 als der Sohn einer gracisirten Slawenfamilien in einen Dorfe bei Adrianople geboren."

[19] P. J. Šafařik, Slowanske Starozitnosti (Praze, 1837), p. 602: "Basilius Přigmjm Macedonjn ze slowanských rodičúw pošel gak ze zápasnickeho geho sýrazu (κατὰ πόδεσιν T. podreza, Succisio), tak též ze Swědectwj arabského děgepisce Hamzy, gisto gest."

[20] On the subject of nineteenth-century Russian historians, see A. A. Vasiliev, "The Origin of Basil the Macedonian," V.V., 12 (1906), 153-57.

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A third school, relying heavily on Armenian sources, asserted Basil's Armenian ancestry, although not always his royal lineage. One of the earliest pioneers of this school was Michael Tchamtchian or Chamich, the author of a history of Armenia in three volumes. That Tchamtchian believed in the Armenian origin of Basil can be seen from the following passage:

> At this period Basilius an Armenian of the family of the Arsacidae was elevated to the Imperial throne at Constantinople. It being the custom with all the members of this family, on their being invested with kingly power, to have the ceremony of their coronations performed by a Bagratian, Basilius on this occasion sent a chief of the name of Niketas or Nicodemus to Ashot, entreating him to come to him for the purpose of fulfilling this ancient custom. Ashot being unable from the nature of his situation to perform this office in person, sent to Constantinople a splendid crown, which being received, Basilius testified much affection for him, calling him his beloved son, and making a treaty with him for the continuance of their friendship.[21]

The learned Orientalist San-Martin, who edited Le Beau's Histoire du Bas-Empire, also supported Basil's Armenian ancestry by indicating the prominence of Armenians in the Byzantine army since Justinian's era and above all the Armenian name of Basil's brother Symbatius.[22] The view of these two scholars, however, was submerged by an avalanche of other interpretations and passed almost unnoticed until A. Rambaud's study in 1870 re-examined this subject. The results of his researches are as follows: (1) The Armenian ancestry of Basil's family is much better substantiated than

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[21] M. Tchamtchian, History of Armenia (3 vols.; Venice, 1784-1786). (In Armenian.) English translation by Avdall (Calcutta, 1827), II, 8-9.

[22] Le Beau, op. cit., p. 181.

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his Slavic origin, for the latter is supported by just one word found in the Arabic historians and by the assumption that Slavs inhabited the region of Adrianople. (2) His royal origin is more difficult to prove, but it has the support of Genesius, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and the Armenian sources. (3) The brother of Basil, Symbatius, had an Armenian name. (4) Armenian sources indicate the very canton from which Basil's family originated.[23] In Rambaud's view, therefore, the Armenian ancestry of Basil rests on incontrovertible evidence. Although many continued to ignore Rambaud's arguments, he did, nevertheless, influence H. F. Tozer, the editor of Finlay's History of Greece from Its Conquest by the Romans to the Present Time (1877). Tozer, however, remained sceptical as to Basil's Arsacid lineage. To quote him:

> It might be rather said to be in the highest degree improbable, as it was not likely that the peasant ancestors of the emperor should have preserved such a tradition; and there would be a strong temptation to invent it subsequently.[24]

In 1888 the publication of the Vita Euthymii by the noted German philologist Carl de Boor further enhanced the whole position of the Armenian school, for it served to reinforce the existing evidence of the court historians.

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[23] A. Rambaud, L'Empire grec au dixième siècle (Paris, 1870), pp. 147-48.

[24] G. Finlay, History of Greece from Its Conquest by the Romans to the Present Time, ed. H. F. Tozer (Oxford, 1877), II, 228-29 (note).

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In this document, Basil is called an Armenian.[25] The impact which this new source had was most significant, especially on German scholarship. In 1897 H. Gelzer made the following remark as a result of de Boor's commentary: "Concerning the Armenian origin of the new dynasty [the Macedonian] there is no longer any doubt."[26] Not all historians were influenced by this discovery. C. W. Oman[27] and the Dutch Byzantinist D. C. Hesseling,[28] for instance, continued to ignore the problem of Basil's origin. Grosvenor, on the other hand, in 1895, much in the same way as Finlay had done forty-one years earlier, still referred to Basil as a Slavonian groom who made good.[29]

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[25] Vita Euthymii, ed. C. de Boor (Berlin, 1888), p. 2; see also commentary on pp. 130-32. There is now an English translation by P. Karlin-Hayter in Byzantion, 25-27 (1955-1957), 1-172, 747-78.

[26] H. Gelzer, Abriss der byzantinischen Kaisergeschichte (Munich, 1897), p. 974 (n. 1): "An der Armenischen Herkunft der neuen Dynastie is nicht zu zweifeln."

[27] C. W. Oman, Byzantine Empire (London, 1892), p. 213, ignores the problem like many of the earlier historians and merely refers to him as Basil the Macedonian: "Presently Michael grew tired of spending on state affairs any time that he could spare from his orgies, and appointed as caesar and colleague his boon companion Basil the Macedonian. Basil had reached the position of Grand Chamberlain purely by the Emperor's favour; he rose from the lowest ranks and is said to have first entered Michael's service in the humble position of a groom."

[28] D. C. Hesseling, Essai sur la civilisation byzantine (Paris, 1907), pp. 172-73. This is the French edition. The author merely refers to Basil as a peasant: "Basile paysan très peu dégrossi était devenu, empereur, grâce a son habilité."

[29] Grosvenor, Constantinople (Boston, 1895), I, 345-46.

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As the twentieth century dawned, the problem of Basil's origin was subjected to a more specialized and detailed treatment. In a lengthy article published in 1906, A. A. Vasiliev, a noted Russian Byzantinist, re-examined the problem thoroughly and came to the following conclusions: (1) Basil the First was the descendent of Armenians who had been settled in Macedonia. (2) His genealogy as given by the court historians was simply a creation of the Patriarch Photius and therefore fictional. (3) From the Arabic writers one might infer that Basil could have conceivably come from a mixed family. The evidence for this supposition, however, is weak.[30] The incontrovertible evidence accumulated by Vasiliev seemingly put an end to the controversial debate; nevertheless, some adamantly continued to doubt at least the emperor's racial purity. This scepticism is comprehensible if all of our contradictory sources are given due consideration. First of all, there are the references which are found in the Arabic authorities, some of which simply and clearly designate him a Slav, while others call him a Slav because his mother was a Slav. In addition, there is also the evidence of the Slavonization of Thrace, the region in which Basil was born.[31] In 1908 the first

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[30] Vasiliev, op. cit., pp. 148-65.

[31] On the Slavs, see P. Charanis, "The Chronicle of Monemvasia and the Question of the Slavonic Settlements in Greece," D.O.P., 4 (1950), 141ff. Also, for invasions, see P. Lemerle, "Invasions et migrations dans les Balkans depuis la fin de l'époque romaine jusqu'au VIII siècle," Revue Historique, 211 (1954), 303ff, and A. Bon, Le Péloponnèse Byzantin jusqu'en 1204 (Paris, 1951), pp. 31ff.

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monograph to deal with the Emperor Basil appeared, written by the distinguished Byzantinist Albert Vogt. On the ancestry of Basil, Vogt came to the following conclusions:

> It is very probable, in my opinion, that the family of Basil could well be Armenian through his ancestors, but it was very much Slavonized and so for a long time, in consequence of marriages with the Slavs who were numerous in this part of the empire, that in fact, he was a Slav. However, Constantine VII who, perhaps, copied the forged genealogy of Photius seeking to return into the good graces of Basil found that it was more glorious to derive his family from Armenia, an independent state which was allied with Byzantium, than with the Slavic people who lived under imperial authority, were poor, and regarded by the inhabitants of the Empire as an inferior race.[32]

Two distinguished English studies by F. W. Bussell[33] and E. Foord[34] also indicated some scepticism about Basil's racial purity, but they did not totally agree with Vogt's conclusions.

The majority of scholars were indubitably swayed by Vasiliev's research and above all by the evidence found in

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[32] A. Vogt, Basile I, empereur de Byzance et la civilisation byzantine à la fin du IX^e siècle (Paris, 1908), pp. 20-21 (n. 3). Hereafter cited as Vogt, Basile I.

[33] F. W. Bussell, The Roman Empire: Essays on the Constitutional History from the Accession of Domitian to the Retirement of Nicephorus III (London, 1910), II, 177: "The precise origin of Basil the 'Arsacid,' the Slav, the Macedonian, the Armenian--we shall never know; nor is the birth of this bold but isolated figure a serious matter. But he depended on Armenian support, and received a crown with gratitude from an Armenian sovereign."

[34] E. Foord, The Byzantine Empire, the Rearguard of European Civilization (London, 1911), p. 236: "He confided his suspicions to his Grand Chamberlain, Basil, a man of half-Armenian, half-Macedonian descent, who had won his favour in the first instance by his personal strength and skill in horse-breaking. Basil was a man of great natural ability, and endeared himself to the wretched Emperor by repeatedly drinking him under the table at the Court debauches."

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the Vita Euthymii. Among these was the foremost English Byzantinist of his age, J. B. Bury, who in his History of the Eastern Roman Empire (1912) made the following observations with regard to Basil:

> His Armenian descent is established beyond doubt and the legend that he was a Slav has no better a foundation than the fiction which claimed Slavonic parentage for the Emperor Justinian. But his family was obscure; and the illustrious lineage which his descendents claimed connecting him through his grandfather with the Arsacids and by his grandmother with Constantine the Great and Alexander, was an audicious and ingenious invention of the Patriarch Photius.[35]

In his brief but articulate study of the Byzantine Empire in 1919, the prolific French scholar Charles Diehl came to this same conclusion.[36]

In 1923 the Greek Byzantinist Nikos Bees made a further discovery, noting that an important fourteenth-century source had been overlooked by earlier investigators such as A. A. Vasiliev and A. Vogt.[37] The source to which he was referring was the Miracle of St. Eugenios, written about 1350 A.D. by John Lazaropoulos, the Metropolitan of Trapezunt.[38] Although this document is relatively late, it

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[35] J. B. Bury, History of the Eastern Roman Empire (London, 1912), p. 165. Hereafter cited as Bury, E.R.E.

[36] C. Diehl, History of the Byzantine Empire (Paris, 1919) translated into English, 1925, p. 71 (n. 1): "The family of Basil was of Armenian origin, and had been very recently transplanted in Macedonia." He continued to hold this view later: C. Diehl and G. Marcais, Histoire du Moyen Âge (Paris, 1936), III, 327.

[37] N. A. Bees, "Eine unbeachtete Quelle über die Abstammung des Kaisers Basilios I, des Mazedoniers," B.Ng.Jb., 4 (1923), 76.

[38] H. G. Beck, Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich (Munich, 1959), p. 794.

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should be added to our earlier accounts for it is the only source which gives an exact place of his birth, at Charioupolis near Adrianople.[39]

In the 1930's the prevailing opinion among scholars was unhesitatingly to accept Basil's Armenian ancestry, and two notable surveys of this period clearly manifested this trend. They were Steven Runciman's Byzantine Civilisation and N. Iorga's Histoire de la vie byzantine. Empire et civilisation.[40] Investigation of this subject, however, did not terminate here. On the contrary, two other leading historians initiated a thorough and highly specialized re-examination of the ninth century. One of them, N. Adontz, made an inquiry into Basil's early life which he published in Byzantion.[41] The results of his investigation showed that Basil was an Armenian on both sides of his family. At the same time, the prolific Belgian scholar, Henri Grégoire, re-evaluated the Amorian dynasty and arrived at basically

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[39] A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Fontes historiae imperii trapezuntini (St. Petersburg, 1897), p. 79: "ὁ ἐν βασιλεῦσι μέγιστος ῥωμαίων αὐτοκράτωρ βασίλειος ὁ Μακεδών ... πατρίδα μὲν ἔσχε τὴν Χαριούπολιν, πόλιν οὖσαν Μακεδονίας."

[40] S. Runciman, Byzantine Civilisation (London, 1933), p. 46 (n. 1): "Basil was born in Macedonian Thrace, near Adrianople. By birth he claimed to be an Armenian."
N. Iorga, Histoire de la vie byzantine. Empire et civilisation (3 vols.; Bucharest, 1934), I, 113: "Mais ce fils de paysans de Thrace descendants d'une ancienne colonie d'Arméniens à Andrinople."

[41] N. Adontz, "L'âge et l'origine de l'empereur Basile I," Byzantion, 8 (1933), 475-550; 9 (1934), 223-60.

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the same conclusion.[42] The research of these two historians had considerable effect, directly or indirectly, on contemporary scholarship. Constantine Amantos' History of the Byzantine Empire (1939-1947) was, for instance, heavily influenced by Adontz' interpretation.[43] In 1940, after a long period of relative inactivity in a field where they had previously made both numerous and valuable contributions, the Russian scholar M. V. Levtchenko was led to this same conjecture in his Marxist survey of the Empire.[44]

More recent studies of Byzantine history have more or less wholeheartedly supported the case for Basil's Armenian nationality. Those works which seemingly exhibit not a shadow of a doubt concerning this question are Paul Lemerle's Histoire du Byzance,[45] S. Der Nersessian's Armenia and the Byzantine Empire,[46] and Peter Charanis' The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire.[47] Two other works of George Ostrogorsky[48]

[42] H. Grégoire, "Études sur le neuvième siècle," Byzantion, 8 (1933), 515-50. He still held this view in the new Cambridge Medieval History (Cambridge, 1966), IV, 116.

[43] C. Amantos, History of the Byzantine Empire (Athens, 1947), II, 21. (In Greek.)

[44] M. V. Levtchenko, Byzance des origines à 1453 (Paris, 1949), p. 157: "Issu d'une famille de paysans d'origine arménienne."

[45] P. Lemerle, Histoire du Byzance (Paris, 1943). English translation: History of Byzantium (New York, 1964), p. 88: "The Dynasty was founded by Basil I, the descendent of an Armenian family whose home was in Macedonia."

[46] S. Der Nersessian, Armenia and the Byzantine Empire (Harvard, 1945), p. 20.

[47] P. Charanis, The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire (Lisbon, 1963), pp. 34-35.

[48] G. Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State (New Brunswick, 1957), p. 206, says: "Basil came of a family which was probably of Armenian origin."

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and Louis Bréhier[49] might be placed in the same category as those above; however, both hold some reservations about this question.

Most recently the distinguished Hungarian Byzantinist Gyula Moravcsik has brought to light new evidence from a contemporary anonymous poem which had not hithertofore been studied. According to this source which was composed between 867-872, the humble lineage of Basil is poetically suggested.[50] In the light of this recent discovery the debate over this controversy should be at an end. Unfortunately this is not yet the case. A learned scholar at Dumbarton Oaks, R. J. H. Jenkins, has again suggested the probability of Basil's Slavic parentage at least on his mother's side.[51]

The Origin and Birth of Basil I: The Sources

From the preceding account, it is evident that scholars have debated the problem of Basil's origin and birth for almost 300 years. This is comprehensible in the light of the diversity and contradictory nature of the sources, but recent analytical studies and new discoveries call for a

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[49] L. Bréhier, Le monde byzantin: Vie et mort du Byzance (3 vols.; Paris, 1946), I, 211: "Né vers, 827 de pauvres artisans des environs d'Adrianople, peut-être d'origine Arménienne."

[50] Moravcsik, op. cit. See also his "Ανώνυμον ἀφιερωτικὸν ποίημα περὶ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος βασιλείου Α' εἰς μνήμην Κ. Ἀμάντου (Athens, 1960), pp. 1-10.

[51] R. J. H. Jenkins, Byzantium: The Imperial Centuries 610-1071 A.D. (New York, 1966), p. 165.

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more definitive reassessment today.[52] In my opinion, this can be best attained by a thorough description and analysis of the relevant documents which are at the disposal of the historian.

The Byzantine-Greek Sources

First, the most important sources are the Byzantine-Greek authorities themselves. Although they may be at times prejudiced and contradictory, they are nevertheless, by far, more reliable than the other authorities. This is understandable, since they were describing their own history and had at their disposal more reliable information from which to compile their narratives. In order to facilitate this study I have divided these sources into three categories:

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[52]Early studies which deal with the sources are too numerous to mention here. Three studies, however, are still very helpful: Rambaud, op. cit.; F. Hirsch, Byzantinische Studien (Leipzig, 1876); and K. Krumbacher, Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur (2d ed.; Munich, 1897). To these must be added the following modern studies: Adontz, op. cit.; P. J. Alexander, "Secular Biography at Byzantium," Speculum, 15 (1940), 194-209; F. Barišić, "Génésios et le continuateur de Theophane," Byzantion, 28 (1958-1959), 119-33; Bury, E.R.E.; F. Dvornik, The Photian Schism (Cambridge, 1948); Grégoire, op. cit.; H. Grégoire, "Michel III et Basile le Macédonien dans les inscriptions d'Ancyre," Byzantion, 5 (1929-1930), 327-46; R. J. H. Jenkins, "Constantine VII's Portrait of Michael III," Bulletin de la classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques, 34 (1948), 71-77; R. J. H. Jenkins, "The Classical Background of the Scriptores Post Theophanem," D.O.P., 8 (1954), 13-30; R. J. H. Jenkins, "Symeon the Logothete," ibid., 19 (1965), 91-112; G. Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica (2 vols., 2d ed.; Berlin, 1958); Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 61-126; Vasiliev, op. cit., pp. 148-65; A. A. Vasiliev, "The Emperor Michael III in Apocryphal Literature," Byzantina Metabyzantina, 1 (1946), Part I, 237-48; Vogt, Basile I; A. Vogt and I. Hausherr, "Oraison funèbre de Basile I par son fils Leon VI le Sage," Orientalia Christiana Periodica, 26 (1932), Part I (hereafter cited as Funeral Oration).

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the contemporary authorities, the court historians, and the derivative writers.

The Contemporary Authorities

Unfortunately for the historian, a great gap exists in Byzantine historiography from the middle of the ninth century to the middle of the tenth century. There is no contemporary monograph which deals with Basil's life.[53] What exists is meager; nevertheless, the historian must do his best to employ what has survived.

The earliest in this category is an anonymous poem which has been preserved as a preface to Alexander Lykopolite's work, Contra Manichaei opiniones disputatio. Written between the years 867-872, the poem consisted of 231 lines in iambic verse of which the first 60 lines are lost.[54] Although this work was first published in 1895 by A. Brinkmann, it had not been utilized by scholars until the Hungarian Byzantinist Gyula Moravcsik showed its value in 1960 as a contemporary document.[55] As the tenth and eighteenth homilies of Photius lauded Michael III as a great emperor, the anonymous poet

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[53]Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 61; J. Hussey, Church and Learning in the Byzantine Empire (New York, 1963), pp. 22-36.

[54]Alexander Lycopolitani, Contra Manichaei opiniones disputatio, ed. A. Brinkmann (Leipzig, 1895), pp. xvi-xxii. For the date of this work the reference to Basil's forthcoming Paulician campaign places a terminus for the work at 872. So it must have been written between his accession in 867 and the former year. See Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 64.

[55]Ibid., p. 63.

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also begins by extolling Basil with this same epithet.[56] Proceeding, then, in a stereotyped manner reminiscent of the court historians, the poet characterizes him as follows.[57] First, he draws a comparison between Basil and earlier rulers, but concludes that the former by virtue of the stature of his deeds and God-fearing life surpassed all others.[58] Next, he describes his achievements in war and peace. In the former case he jubilantly lauds how the emperor humbled the heathen and tamed their arrogance.[59] With respect to his peaceful endeavors he especially extols his boundless benevolence,[60] his charity for the welfare of his people,[61] and above all is emphatic about his lack of discrimination in the dispension of justice.[62] The poet concludes his poem with a prayer for his protection and for

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[56] On the homilies above, see Photius, The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, translation and commentary by C. Mango (Harvard, 1958); hereafter cited as Photius, Homilies. For dating and reference to Michael III, see R. J. H. Jenkins and C. A. Mango, "The Date and Significance of the Tenth Homily of Photius," D.O.P., 9-10 (1956), 123-40. For the line in Alexander Lycopolitani, see op. cit., p. xviii, l. 93.

[57] For the style of the court historians, see Alexander, op. cit.

[58] Lycopolitani, op. cit., p. xviii, ll. 107-10.

[59] Ibid., pp. xviii-xix, ll. 119-24. Perhaps this refers to Basil's early success in the West over the Arabs.

[60] Ibid., p. xix, ll. 139-46.

[61] Ibid., p. xx, ll. 157-67.

[62] Ibid., pp. xx-xxi, ll. 177-97.

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victory over the Paulicians.[63]

The real significance of this eulogistic poem lies in the simple fact that this earliest of our contemporary sources alludes unmistakably to Basil's humble origin, for it draws a vivid comparison between the former and the Biblical David, who, he says, also ascended from the position of a simple herdsman to attain the crown.[64]

A second contemporary source is the Funeral Oration of Basil I which was composed by his son and successor Leo VI, surnamed the Wise.[65] Written either in the year 886 or 887, this panegyrical study employed as its model the Orations of Gregory of Nazianzus.[66] Like most biographical encomia, this discourse describes Basil in the familiar stereotyped pattern which had evolved over a period of centuries.[67] Although the Funeral Oration does not provide the

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[63] Ibid., pp. xxi-xxii, ll. 197-231.

[64] Ibid., p. xvii, ll. 82-84. The poet also remarks that he came from simple but pious and esteemed parents.

[65] This work was first mentioned by D. Serruys, "Les Homilies de Léon le Sage," B.Z., 12 (1903), 167. It was first published, however, by Vogt and Hausherr, op. cit., pp. 5-79.

[66] On the influence of Gregory of Nazianzus, see ibid., pp. 24-30; also N. Adontz, "La portée historique de l'oraison funèbre de Basile I par son fils Léon VI le Sage," Byzantion, 8 (1933), 501-13, and Alexander, op. cit., p. 205.

[67] The scheme of a royal encomion as it was developed by the Hellenistic followers of Isocrates was: (1) ancestry, parentage, and birth; (2) youth and career; (3) and (4) deeds in war and peace; (5) private or family life and death, etc. See Jenkins, D.O.P., 8, 21. The Funeral Oration is very similar: (1) preface (pp. 38-42); descent (pp. 42-46); (2) mode of life (p. 46), description (pp. 46-48),

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historian with any new materials on Basil's reign and is, furthermore, devoid of facts and personal names, it does nevertheless introduce a different view of his ancestry.[68] Unlike the humble and undignified origin which was attributed to Basil by the anonymous poet, Leo states that Arsacid blood flowed in his father's veins. In addition, he was a direct descendent of the Achaemenid Artaxerxes I (464-425 B.C.).[69] Elsewhere Leo surprisingly says in contradiction that his father's early life was very much like the life of the masses.[70] To be sure, these two remarks are relatively brief, for Leo was candidly emphatic that his purpose was eulogistic, not historical. He refers, therefore, those who are inquisitive about the latter to one of numerous historical works on the subject.[71] From the last remark, it is evident that by the time of Basil's death two traditional acoounts concerning the emperor's birth and origin had emerged. In the earlier anonymous poem he was depicted as a man of humble status. On the other hand, Leo's Funeral

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career (p. 50), matrimony (p. 52), Basil as emperor (p. 54); (3) deeds in war (p. 56); (4) deeds in peace, civil administration (p. 56), justice (p. 60), Church affairs (p. 62); (5) death (pp. 64-79).

[68] On the value of the Funeral Oration, see the Introduction to Vogt and Hausherr, op. cit., p. 8.

[69] Funeral Oration, p. 44, ll. 23-30.

[70] Ibid., p. 46, ll. 6-21.

[71] Ibid., p. 44, ll. 23-26.

[72] Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 67-69, suggests also that Photius created the genealogy as the Vita Ignatii claimed.

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Oration gave him a noble parentage and referred to other historical works which apparently had already elaborated on this topic. Since the earlier source knew nothing of Basil's noble descent, how then did the emperor's ancestry which linked him to the ancient Arsacids evolve? Who if anyone, furthermore, was responsible for its creation? Answers to both of these questions can, I think, be found in another contemporary work which was written by Nicetas of Paphlagonia.[73] In his biography of the Patriarch Ignatius (Vita Ignatii), Nicetas, for instance, vividly relates how the genealogy of Basil was created.[74] Following the exile of Photius to the monastery of Skepes, he reveals that the former Patriarch Photius lamented his bitter fate which had deprived him of his books.[75] He therefore connived an ingenious scheme whereby he might regain the good graces of the emperor. According to Nicetas, Photius believed that this could best be achieved by giving Basil an illustrious

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[73] On Nicetas of Paphlagonia, see Beck, op. cit., pp. 565-66, and Dvornik, op. cit., pp. 272-78. There is a question as to the identity of Nicetas-David, to whom the Vita Ignatii is ascribed, with Nicetas of Paphlagonia, the author of some theological and philosophical writings. See, on this, ibid., pp. 274-75 (n. 5), and A. Vogt, "Deux discours inédits de Nicetas de Paphlagonie," Orientalia Christiana, 74 (1931), Part I, 10.

[74] F. Dvornik, op. cit., p. 272, dates the work after the death of Photius.

[75] Nicetas of Paphlagonia, Vita Ignatii, ed. Migne, P.G., 105 (Paris, 1862), pp. 565-68. The story is repeated in Symeon Magister, where the Monastery of Skepes is mentioned in connection with the exile; Symeon Magister, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, CSHB, 1838), p. 689, 7, 5-6.

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lineage.[76] As a result, he invented a line of descendents which began with the Armenian King Tiridates, a contemporary of Saint Gregory the Illuminator and ended with Basil's father.[77] This elaborate genealogy he wrote out in Alexandrian characters on an old parchment, and had it bound with a cover of an old manuscript. To it he added a porphecy that Basil's father would have a son called Beklas who had all the characteristics of Basil and who would be the most happy and long-lived emperor.[78] The name Beklas, he said, was composed from the initial letters of the names of Basil and his family: (B)asil; his wife, (E)udocia; and his sons (K)onstantine, (L)eo, (A)lexander, and (S)tephen.[79] Once completed, this document was placed into the Imperial Library by a confederate, the cleric Theophanes, who at an opportune moment showed it to the emperor as a book prophecy which only Photius could read.[80] As a consequence, the emperor recalled Photius, whose interpretation so impressed the emperor that he reinstated him.[81] It is now certain because of F. Dvornik's thorough investigation that Photius'

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[76] Vita Ignatii, p. 565.

[77] Ibid. [78] Ibid.

[79] On the chronology of Basil's sons, see C. Porphyrogenitus, Vita Basilii, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, CSHB, 1838), p. 264, 35, 9-17; also Vita Euthymii, Byzantion, 25-27, 10, 21. For a new study on this chronological problem, see Jenkins, D.O.P., 19, 98.

[80] Vita Ignatii, p. 568.

[81] Ibid. Adontz, Byzantion, 9, 232-59, has shown a parallel to this story to one in the Vita Methodii in which a similar discovery is made for the Emperor Theophilus' benefit.

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restoration to imperial favor was hardly due to such a fanciful contrivance as Nicetas described but more so to political circumstances.[82] The veracity of the Vita Ignatii, however, should not be totally repudiated purely because of its anti-Photian bias. On the contrary, with respect to the problem of the fabrication of Basil's genealogy, it has, I think, preserved a germ of the truth.[83] Who but Photius was better qualified in such matters? In the first place, he had the prerequisites of erudition and scholarship in ancient history which are vividly discernible in his voluminous Bibliotheca.[84] Furthermore, he himself had a common interest in Basil's lineage because of his Armenian ancestry through his mother, Irene, the sister of Arsaber.[85] To this must be added the evidence of the prophecy which Photius gave to Basil's genealogy. According to both the Vita Basilii of Constantine VII and the Armenian historian Vardan, a similar prophecy

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[82]Dvornik, op. cit., p. 164.

[83]The date of this forgery is difficult to determine, but it must be between Photius' return from exile and the Funeral Oration of Leo which already refers to it. Everything hinges on when Photius returned. The views on this vary: Hergenrother, op. cit., p. 266, supports the year 876; Dvornik, op. cit., p. 164, says that it was not later than 873; B. Laurdas, Orthodoxia, 25 (1950), 472-74, says it was in the year 875.

[84]Photius, Bibliotheca, ed. R. Henry (5 vols.; Paris, 1959-1967) (more in progress). In Vol. I, one can see Photius' interest not only in history but in that of the Parthians and Persians in particular; see sec. 58, pp. 51-52, and sec. 72, pp. 105-47. He may have also influenced Genesius and Constantine because of his interest in Alexander and the Successors; see Vol. II, sec. 91, pp. 16-20, and sec. 92, pp. 20-33.

[85]Theophanes Continuatus, p. 175, 22, 1-6.

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foretold the ascension of an Arsacid to the Byzantine throne.[86] Vardan's prophecy has been, furthermore, linked chronologically to the Photius era. According to the Byzantinist N. Adontz, Vardan's account was definitely based on a Greek prototype dating approximately from the time of Basil's ascension to the throne in order to establish his royal and Arsacid origin.[87] This new evidence further validates Nicetas' account of the Photian genealogy.

To the description of the Vita Ignatii must be added another hagiographical source, the Vita Euthymii.[88] Available to the scholar since de Boor's publication in 1888, this contemporary work, while it is silent about Basil's alleged nobility does, nevertheless, attest his Armenian ancestry with the following remark:

> It was Stylianus called Zaoutzes in the Armenian dialect, seeing he was a Macedonian of Armenian descent like himself, whom he left in charge, committing to him the direction of all matters, ecclesiastical and political.[89]

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[86] Vita Basilii, p. 241, 17-23, tells of the prophecy of Isaac. The historian Vardan tells of the prophecy of Saak or Sahak; see Vardan, Universal History (Moscow, 1861). Adontz quotes Universal History, p. 85, and Hayapatoum, II, 42-48, in Byzantion, 9, 255.

[87] Ibid. See, also, P. Garabed der Sahaghian, "Un document arménien de la généalogie de Basile I er," B.Z., 20 (1911), 165-76.

[88] Euthymius was Patriarch of Constantinople from 907 to 912. His biography begins with the hunting accident which caused the death of Basil (Aug. 21, 886) and ends with the death of Euthymius (Aug. 4, 917). There are several lacunas both at the beginning and end of the composition, which was written no later than 920. See Byzantion, 25-27, 1-172, 747-78.

[89] Vita Euthymii, Byzantion, 25-27, 10, 21-28; English translation p. 11.

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The Court Historians

In the tenth century the court historians further modified and elaborated the original legend of Basil's genealogy, perhaps to enhance the position of the re-established Macedonian dynasty after the long usurpation of the Lacapenoi.[90] First amongst these was Joseph Genesius,[91]

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[90]This has been accepted by the following scholars: Adontz, Byzantion, 9, 232-45; Bury, E.R.E.; F. Dölger, Byzantinische Diplomatik (Ettal, 1956), p. 308; Dvornik, op. cit., p. 164; Hergenröther, op. cit., pp. 258-59; Hirsch, op. cit., pp. 231-32; Le Beau, op. cit., p. 181; Vasiliev, V.V., 12, 148-65; Vogt, Basile I, p. 22; Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 68ff.

[91]The identity of Genesius was subject to some debate for a considerable period. The controversy arose from a line in the Chronicle of Leo Grammaticus ("Κωνσταντῖνος δὲ ὁ ἐξ Ἀρμενιῶν ὁ πατὴρ Θωμᾶ πατρικίου καὶ γενεσίου δρουγγαρίου ὢν τῆς βίγλας"); see Chronographia, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, CSHB, 1842), p. 249, 7-9. Hirsch, op. cit., pp. 116-74, therefore, conjectured wrongly that the Genesius referred to in the Chronographia was none other than the historian. Krumbacher, op. cit., pp. 264-65, also accepted this view ("Joseph Genesios stammte aus einer vornehmen Familie in Byzanz; sein Vater Konstantin war unter Michael III Befehlshaber der Leibgarde und Logothet"). This, however, presented a chronological problem which was first noticed by H. Waschke in an article, "Genesios," Philologus, 37 (1878), 255-75 ("dars jener Konstantin, der unter Michael III lebte, nicht der Vater des Genesios gewesen sein Könne"). In 1901 C. de Boor finally identified both Thomas and Genesius from the correspondence of Leo Choerosphaktes; see "Zu Genesios," B.Z., 10 (1901), 62-65. According to de Boor, Thomas held the position of πατρίκιος καὶ λογοθέτης τοῦ δρόμου under Leo VI, while his brother Genesius was μαγιστρος ἀνθύπατος καὶ πατρίκιος According to Leon Choerosphactes, ed. G. Kolias (Athens, 1939), p. 93, this Genesius was a very old man when he made a diplomatic mission to the East in 906. de Boor, therefore, conjectured that this Genesius and the historian could not be the same individual. In a further attempt to discover the relationship, de Boor discovered the answer in the thirteenth-century MS of the Vatican Codex of the Chronographica. It read: "Κωνσταντῖνος ὁ ἐξ Ἀρμενιῶν, ὁ πατὴρ Θωμᾶ τοῦ πατρικίου καὶ λογοθέτου τοῦ δρόμου πάππος δὲ Γενεσίου πατρικίου καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ Καυκλείου"; thus the historian Genesius was a nephew of the man in the Chronographia.

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a man who came from a distinguished Armenian family and held at court the important rank of Patrician as well as the post of Chartulary of the Ink.[92] As a member of the literary circle of the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (912-959), he was requested by this emperor to write a history which, in essence, continued the work of the chronographer Theophanes, a distant relative.[93] Between the years 944 and 949, Genesius composed a history which included the period 813 to 886.[94] Writing in a terse and pretentious style thick with Homeric metaphors and myths, logical and etymological excursus, Genesius traced the lineage of Basil

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[92]On the functions of this office, see J. B. Bury, The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century (London, 1911), p. 117. Hereafter cited as Bury, I.A.S. According to Bury, apparently the office first appeared in the ninth century.

[93]C. Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio, ed. G. Moravcsik and R. J. H. Jenkins (Budapest, 1949), pp. 98-99, 22, 71-81. Constantine calls the historian Theophanes his uncle on his mother's side. This is hardly possible; see De administrando imperio: Commentary, ed. R. J. H. Jenkins et al. (London, 1962), p. 80. Hereafter cited as D.A.I. Commentary. The Commentary is, however, wrong to date the death of Theophanes in 818. It was in 817; see C. von de Vorst, "En quelle année mourut S. Theophanes le chronographe?," Analecta Bollandiana, 31 (1912), 148-56. If Theophanes died in 817 he must have been his great-great-great-uncle.

[94]The date of Genesius' work is difficult to establish and views on it vary. Hirsch, op. cit., pp. 122, 177, 181, 224, said it was earlier than Theophanes Continuatus. Bury, E.R.E., pp. 460-61, agreed with Hirsch and said it was composed between the years 944-949. H. Grégoire, Byzantion, 5 (1929-1930), 335, 346; ibid., 6 (1931), 495; ibid., 7 (1932), 289-90; ibid., 9 (1934), 185 (n. 1), disagrees, and states he used Theophanes Continuatus, for it appears to be a summarization. Barišić, op. cit., disagrees with Grégoire and reconfirms the older views.

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to the Parthian Arsacids.[95] Like the Vita Ignatii, he named as the emperor's immediate descendent the Arsacid Tiridates, but he also linked to this glorification the names of Philip and Alexander of Macedonia.[96] Although Genesius did not show a clear connection between these illustrious personalities and Basil, he was, nevertheless, careful to indicate that the emperor's parents were not ignoble or obscure.[97]

Seemingly, the Basileiai of Genesius was destined for the general public; nevertheless, it did not perhaps please the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus.[98] It may be,

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[95]See ibid., p. 120; also Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica, I, 318.

[96]Genesius, Basileiai, ed. C. Lachmann (Bonn, CSHB, 1834), p. 107, 14-18.

[97]Ibid., p. 107, 18-20 ("ὃς Μακεδόσης γῆς ἐκφυεὶς γεννητόρων ἦν κατὰ γενεὰν οὐκ ἀσήμων, τροφεύς τε νεανικῶς").

[98]Constantine was the sole son of Leo VI and his fourth wife, Zoe Carbunopsina (Theophanes Continuatus, op. cit., p. 370, 23). In his early infancy as well as in his manhood, he suffered from an infirmity (ibid., p. 370, 23, 8-9, states he was of weak disposition and sickly constitution; in addition, the Vita Euthymii, p. 76, mentions this at his baptism). This factor, in addition to his precarious political position in his formative years, led him to a life of scholarly pursuits, literary and artistic (Theophanes Continuatus, op. cit., p. 447, 15, 8-9). Also, the Western Liudprand of Cremona mentions his artistic ability: Liudprand of Cremona, Antapodosis, in The Works of Liudprand of Cremona, trans. F. A. Wright (London, 1930), chaps. iii, xxxvii. Only at the age of forty did he finally establish himself on the throne through the assistance of Basil Peteinos and others loyal to him. See Georgius Continuatus, Chronographia, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, CSHB, 1858), p. 921, 60, 11-16; also R. Guilland, "L'histoire administrative de l'empire Byzantin," Byzantion, 25-27 (1955-1957), 664. On the chronology of Constantine, see P. Grierson and R. J. H. Jenkins, "The Date of Constantine VII's Coronation," Byzantion, 32 (1962), 133-38.

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as Barišić has conjectured, that the composition included some facts which in an unguarded moment perhaps were unflattering about his grandfather, the founder of the Macedonian dynasty.[99] Consequently, the emperor himself took the initiative in rewriting the history of the period.[100] Initially, this work fell into two parts, but it was later extended to three.[101] The first four books, which constituted a true continuation of the Chronographia of Theophanes, were compiled by an unknown pupil and colleague of Constantine.[102] Employing a biographical rather than an annalistic

[99]Barišić, op. cit., p. 122.

[100]Theopanes Continuatus, op. cit., p. 3.

[101]The work, which begins where Theophanes left off, falls into three principal divisions. Books I-IV cover the period 813-868 and include the reigns of Leo V, Michael II, Theophilus, Theodora, and Michael III. The authorship of this part is unknown, although some believed it to be Leontius Byzantius. This interpretation has been repeated by H. G. Nickles, "The Continuatio Theophanis," Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, 67 (1937), 223. His argument is that there is no evidence of such a writer in the tenth century. Krumbacher, op. cit., p. 459, suggested that a certain Theodore Daphnopates was the author of Book VI. This has been accepted by Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica, p. 549. A Russian scholar, Shestakov, however, has attributed the first four books to him also; see D. Anastasijevic and P. Granic, Deuxième Congrès international des études Byzantines (Belgrade, 1929), pp. 35-45. Jenkins, nevertheless, has rejected this latter view; see D.O.P., 8, 11-30. While the authorship of the first part is unknown, that of Book V was composed under the direction of and, in part, actually at the dictation of Constantine; ibid., p. 11. The last book (VI) comprises the history of the period 886 to 963, and was the work of at least two different authors; see ibid. and Nickles, op. cit.

[102]This probably explains why some passages in the continuation correspond to certain ones in the Vita Basilii and the De Ceremoniis; see Hirsch, op. cit., pp. 222-28. Moravcsik has also shown that severallines were definitely borrowed from De administrando imperio; see G. Moravcsik, B.Ng.Jb., 10 (1923), 151-53.

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scheme, the anonymous author was significantly influenced by classical Plutarchian models.[103] The emperor's hand is discernible both in the capacity of an editor-in-chief[104] and as a supplier of materials to the author.[105] On the other hand, Book V of the continuation, which comprised the life of his grandfather, Basil, was personally written by Constantine himself.[106] Unlike Books I-IV, the fifth book (Vita Basilii) differs sharply from the former because of its encomiastic character.[107] This literary form was selected by Constantine for the life of his grandfather because he

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[103] Jenkins has shown that in the section on Michael III the author drew extensively on Plutarch's Life of Antony and probably on a lost Life of Nero; see Bulletin de la classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques, 34, 71-77.

[104] Barišić, op. cit., p. 132.

[105] Jenkins, Bulletin de la classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques, 34, 11.

[106] The date of this work has been disputed by Grégoire (see n. 94 on p. 29). The problem is a complex one and has been interpreted differently by many scholars. Hirsch, op. cit., p. 175, for instance, on a passage in Theophanes Continuatus made the supposition that Books I-IV were not completed in their present shape until the time of Nikephorus Phocas (963-969). E. W. Brooks, "On the Date of the First Four Books of the Continuator of Theophanes," B.Z., 10 (1901), 416-17, has shown that Hirsch misinterpreted the text and that the first four books are no later than the death of Constantine (959). J. B. Bury's view in "The Treatise De administrando imperio," B.Z., 15 (1906), 574, supports the date 949-950; see also Jenkins, D.O.P., 8, 11. The fifth book was written between 948-950; see Bury, B.Z., 15, 574-75; Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica, p. 380.

[107] Jenkins, D.O.P., 8, 16, has argued that the Vita Basilii is not a Bios but an encomion and is different from Books I-IV. The latter owed a great degree of influence to associates who were probably introduced to the University by Photius. The former, however, owed its influence to Nicholas of Damascus.

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wished to glorify and perpetuate Basil's illustrious memory as well as to exonerate him of all crimes which were imputed to him.[108] Using as his model the biography of Augustus by Nicholas of Damascus (fl. first century B.C.), Constantine heralded his grandfather as a new Augustus, the re-founder and renovator of the Roman state.[109] To this end Constantine gave Basil, first of all, an illustrious ancestry. Furthermore, it had to have the appearance of a genuine genealogy. Employing the earlier study of Photius as well as his father's, Constantine further added his own historical knowledge to create the only complete description of Basil's origin.[110]

According to the genealogy of Constantine, Basil was born in the region of Macedonia and was descended from the Armenian Arsacids who once ruled over the Parthians, Armenians, and Medes. In Armenia, however, when the last Arsacid died, a quarrel ensued among the successors. Two of the descendents, Artabanes and Kleines, were exiled from their lands and sought sanctuary in Constantinople. Leo the

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[108] Bury, B.Z., 15, 572-74.

[109] The influence of Nicholas of Damascus has been shown by Jenkins, D.O.P., 8, 24. Apparently Nicholas of Damascus has survived only in the historical excerpta of Constantine Porphyrogenitus: Excerpta Historica iussu Emp. Constantini Porphyrogenitii Confecta, II, ed. Buttner-Wobst (Berlin, 1906), 353-61; III, ed. C. de Boor (Berlin, 1905), 33-58. On Nicholas' Life of Augustus text and English translation, see C. M. Hall, Nicholas of Damascus (Northampton, Mass., 1923).

[110] See Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 61-126; Adontz, Byzantion, 8, 475-550; ibid., 9, 223-60, especially 236-38.

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First (457-474) welcomed and assigned them residences and an income befitting their status. When the Persian king learned of this, he immediately realized their political value and sought to win them over by promises of returning their kingdom. Hearing of these overtures, Leo ordered them taken to Nice in Macedonia for security. Therefore it came to pass that the Arsacids were settled in Macedonia. The years passed, and the Persians were succeeded by the Arabs who, realizing the value of the Arsacids, made a similar offer to their descendents. When the Emperor Heraclius (610-641) learned of this, he decided to remove them further to Philippi. Here, their descendents lived for some time, later being moved to Adrianople.

During the reign of Constantine VI and Irene (780-802), a descendent of Prince Maiktes came to Constantinople on business and by a stroke of fortune met an Armenian called Leo. A friendship emerged from this relationship, and as a result he married one of his daughters. From this marriage came Basil's father.

Some time later Basil's father came to know, at Adrianople, a widow who was a descendent of the emperor Constantine the Great (306-337). Because she came to appreciate him for his qualities, she married her daughter to him, and from this marriage was born Basil. Basil as a result was descended on his paternal side from the Arsacids and from his maternal side from Alexander and Constantine the Great.[111]

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[111]Theophanes Continuatus, op. cit., p. 212, 2 to p. 216, 3, 1-8.

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The Derivative Writers

Among the derivative writers there are two variant traditions which exist. One group clearly derived their information from the court historians. Foremost among these is the Historical Synopsis of John Scylitzes, the Curopolates and Drungarius of the guard.[112] Writing in the eleventh century, Scylitzes endeavored to continue the work of the chronographer Theophanes, because he believed that previous attempts had been inadequate.[113] Scylitzes, however, utilized as his source for the ninth century the account of Theophanes Continuatus, and his narrative is little more than a summarization of the Vita Basilii of Constantine Porphyrogenitus.[114] Shorter, but basically similar, is the late world chronicle of Dorotheos, the Metropolitan of Monemvasia, who also employed this same tradition.[115]

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[112] Scylitzes, who was a contemporary of Michael Psellos, began his work where Theophanes ended in the year 811 and continued to 1079. There is no edition of Scylitzes, but it can be read in Cedrenus, which is virtually a second edition of Scylitzes. On Scylitzes, see Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica, I, 335-40; J. B. Bury, "Roman Emperors from Basil II to Isaac Komnenos," E.H.R., 4 (1889), 41-64, 251-85; C. de Boor, "Zu Johannes Skylitzes," B.Z., 13 (1904), 356-69.

[113] Scylitzes-Cedrenus, Chronographia, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, CSHB, 1838-1839), pp. 4-7 (preface).

[114] Compare ibid., pp. 182-84, and the Vita Basilii, pp. 212-16.

[115] On Dorotheos of Monemvasia, see T. Preger, "Die Chronik vom Jahre 1570 (Dorotheos von Monembasia und Manuel Malaxos)," B.Z., 11 (1902), 4-15; D. Serruys, "La chronique de l'an 1570," B.Z., 12 (1903), 276-77; F. H. Marshall, "The Chronicle of Manuel Malaxos," B.Ng.Jb., 5 (1926-1927), 10-28; Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica, I, 412-14.

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On the other hand, several derivative sources followed a totally different tradition. As a result, their accounts either know nothing of Basil's noble ancestry or merely discount it as a fabrication. In addition, they are even silent about his Armenian ancestry. The first among this group is the so-called Continuation of George the Monk.[116] Written

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[116]The Chronicle of George Continuatus commences where George the Monk terminated his work in 842 and concludes with the year 948. According to Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica, pp. 269-70, the work was composed probably by the Logothete Symeon Magister during the reign of Nicephorus Phocas (963-969). The Russian A. Kazdan, in an article, "Khronika Simeona Logofeta," V.V., 15 (1959), 125-43, has even tried to establish the process by which the Chronicle reached its present state. According to Kazdan, Symeon wrote his first redaction in the period 948-963. In addition, he has conjectured that the sources on which he relied were of three kinds, corresponding to three periods. These he divided as follows: (1) The First period covered the years of Michael III and Basil I (842-886). The prime source for this period was an anti-Basilian biography which he postulated may have been written by a partisan of Photius during the period of the Patriarch's dismissal by Leo VI and his death. (2) The Second period, dealing with the reigns of Leo VI and Alexander (886-912), employed as its source Annals, which recorded the most important events chronologically. (3) Finally, for the period 913-948, Symeon relied on his own personal knowledge and oral information. Jenkins, however, has rejected some of Kazdan's conclusions in an article, D.O.P., 19, 91-112. According to Jenkins, the reign of Basil should also be included in Kazdan's second category, for the Logothete's source for the emperor was also derived from a series of Annals which were probably kept in a Constantinopolitan monastery. From the pcint of view of the sources, Jenkins, consequently, believes that the three divisions of the Logothete's chronicle are as follows: (1) Michael III; (2) Basil through Alexander; (3) Constantine VII to 948. For literature on this subject see, also, Hirsch, op. cit., pp. 63, 69; C. de Boor, "Die Chronik des Logotheten," B.Z., 6 (1897), 233-84; Sp. Lampros, "Zu Symeon Magister," B.Z., 6 (1897), 506-08; Krumbacher, op. cit., 358-65; Vogt, Basile I, pp. 24-25; N. Iorga, "Médaillons l'histoire littéraire byzantine 9. Les continuateurs de Théophane," Byzantion, 2 (1925), 253-60; Adontz, Byzantion, 8, 475-550; Adontz, ibid., 9, 223-60; Ostrogorsky, op. cit., p. 130; Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 110-22.

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in the tenth century probably by Symeon, the Magister and Logothete, this Chronicle which exists in several versions is invaluable for the study of Basil.[117] Stating simply that Basil was born in Macedonia near the region of Adrianople during the reign of Michael I (811-813), Symeon does not comment on his Armenian origin or noble heritage;[118] nevertheless, he does reveal that his parents were very poor.[119]

A separate recension of Symeon's chronicle called Pseudo-Symeon[120] not only repeated the Logothete's words,

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[117] Among the versions of Symeon's Chronicle is the Chronographia of Leo Grammaticus, which was redacted in the year 1013. For literature, see E. Patzig, "Leo Grammaticus und seine Sippe," B.Z., 3 (1894), 470-97; D. Serruys, "Recherches sur l'Épitomé' (Théodose de Mélitène, Léon le Grammairien, Syméon Logothète, etc.)," B.Z., 16 (1907), 1-51. The printed versions of the Logothete's Chronicle which are closest to his own composition are Georgius Continuatus and the redaction of Theodosius Melitenus. The identity of the latter is still much debated. Vasilievski, for instance, found a reference to a ὁ μελιτίνης θεοδόσιος in the commentary of John Sikeliotes and inferred from this that he flourished about 1120. Krumbacher, op. cit., p. 462, placed him in the second half of the eleventh century. Bury, E.R.E., p. 456, also conjectured that he may have lived in the eleventh century. On the other hand, Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica, I, 518, believes that he lived in the tenth century.

[118] Georgius Continuatus, op. cit., p. 817, ll. 12-15. See, also, Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, Appendix C, 122. Almost verbatim is the account of Leo Grammaticus, op. cit., p. 231, ll. 1-5.

[119] Ibid.; see edition reproduced by Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, Appendix A, 120.

[120] Pseudo-Symeon is often misleadingly called Symeon Magister due to an error in the title of the Paris manuscript. The last part of the work covering the period 813-903 was first published by Combefis in 1685 and reprinted by Bekker in 1838 as Symeon Magister. Pseudo-Symeon (Symeon Magister), ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, CSBH, 1838), in two places repeats that Basil was born in Macedonia near Adrianople: p. 655, 11, 19-21; p. 686, 16-21.

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but also added the story of Photius' fabrication of Basil's genealogy which seems derived from the Vita Ignatii.[121]

The accounts found in the derivative writers of the twelfth century very closely approximate the work of Symeon, except that they place more emphasis on the Emperor's humble origin.[122] Foremost amongst these writers is the historian John Zonaras, who flourished in the first half of the twelfth century.[123] Zonaras first relates that Basil was born in Macedonia of ignoble and obscure parents, but adds that some writers of his deeds have invented for him a heritage from the Arsacids.[124]

Even more explicit and detailed is the Historia Imperatorum, an anonymous but popular chronicle which describes the history of the Byzantine emperors to the year 1078.[125] Although much of this work is derived from

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[121] Ibid., p. 689, 7, 5ff, repeats the fabrication of Photius.

[122] Among the twelfth-century authors who retell the story of Photius' invention are Constantine Manasses, Compendium Chronicum, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, CSHB, 1837), pp. 226-27, ll. 5309-19; Michael Glycas, Annales, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, CSHB, 1836), pp. 552-53.

[123] Zonaras held several important posts in the imperial service, such as the Drungarios of the guard and chief of the secretarial staff. Later he retired to a life of monastic seclusion on Saint Glyceria, one of the Princes islands, where he wrote his history from Creation to the year 1118. For literature, see Hirsch, op. cit., pp. 377-91; N. Iorga, "Médaillons d'histoire littéraire byzantine 20. Zonaras," Byzantion, 2 (1925), 284-86; Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica, I, 344-48.

[124] Zonaras, Epitomae Historiarum, ed. T. Büttner-Wobst (Bonn, CSHB, 1897), III, 407-08.

[125] See Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 122.

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Constantine's biography of Basil, it does, nevertheless, include some independent information. For instance, the anonymous author is very emphatic about Basil's humble origin and describes his parents in the following way: "His parents were neither rich nor honored. Nor did they possess material goods, neither gold nor silver, nor orchards, no property; but they were poor."[126]

Little supplementary information is added by the works of Constantine Manasses[127] and Michael Glycas.[128] Nevertheless, they also emphasize Basil's humble origin.[129] Of course, this is understandable, for they derived their information from Zonaras.[130]

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[126]The text is not yet published, but portions are included in Moravcsik, ibid., pp. 123-26.

[127]The historian Constantine Manasses, who wrote a world chronicle from Creation to the death of Nicephoras III (1081) in the twelfth century, has been identified also as the Metropolitan of Naupaktos. See N. Bees, "Manasses, der Metropolit von Naupaktos, ist identisch mit dem Schriftsteller Konstantinos Manasses," B.Ng.Jb., 7 (1928-1929), 119-30. See also Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica, I, 353-56.

[128]Michael Glycas was a contemporary of Zonaras. Little is known of his life except that he was a secretary and for some reason was blinded without fatal consequences to his eyesight. Like Zonaras', his chronicle began with Creation and ended with the year 1118. For literature, see Hirsch, op. cit., pp. 396-403; Sp. Lampros, "Zu Glykas," B.Z., 3 (1894), 160; J. Dräseke, "Zu Michael Glykas," B.Z., 5 (1896), 54-62; Krumbacher, op. cit., pp. 380-85; Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica, I, 430-32.

[129]Constantine Manasses, op. cit., pp. 221-22, ll. 5190-5200, also mentions their poverty and the fact that they worked with their own hands. The same is repeated by Michael Glycas, op. cit., p. 546.

[130]On this subject, see Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica, I, 354, 431. Glycas says himself that he used Zonaras.

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Later chronicles of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with one possible exception, add little of historical value to this problem. The thirteenth-century world chronicle of Joel, for instance, simply states that Basil was born in Macedonia and was called Kephallos.[131] Of no real importance, also, is the fourteenth-century chronicle of Ephraim, who reiterates the words of Zonaras.[132] On the other hand, a fourteenth-century work, known as the Miracle of Saint Eugenius, adds one piece of information excluded by all the others.[133] It alone of all our sources gives the exact place of Basil's birth--the village of Charioupolis.[134]

The Arab Sources

While the Byzantine sources may have expressed some uncertainty over Basil's Arsacid lineage, there was, nevertheless, not even a whisper raised against his Armenian origin. This, however, is not the case with the Arab sources, for they have promoted a genuine question about Basil's racial origin by unanimously emphasizing his Slavic ancestry.

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[131]The chronicle of Joel was written by an unknown author in the thirteenth century and covers the period from Creation to 1204. Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica, I, 348-49; Hirsch, op. cit., pp. 109-15. For passage, see Joel, Chronographia Compendiaria, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, CSHB, 1836), pp. 557, 10-15.

[132]Ephraim, Chronographia, ed. A. Maio (Bonn, CSHB, 1840), p. 11, ll. 2513-15; V. Laurent, "Éphrem chroniqueur byzantin," Catholicisme, 4 (1953), 301.

[133]The Miracle of Saint Eugenius was written about 1350 A.D. by John Lazaropoulos, the Metropolitan of Trapezunt. See Bees, B.Ng.Jb., 4, 76; Beck, op. cit., p. 794.

[134]Papadopoulos-Kerameus, op. cit., p. 79.

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In order to ascertain the reliability of these sources, it is first necessary to discuss the views of the different authors regardless of their discrepancies.[135] Second, it is imperative to determine what they meant by the word "Slav."

Among the Arab sources, the most important for this problem are the tenth-century writers. The author, however, who has caused the greatest furor over Basil's origin is the historian Ḥamza al-Iṣfahān (Ispahanensis), whose opinion was made popular in the eighteenth century by J. Reiskii.[136] His statement concerning Basil reads as follows: "Then, the Empire passed from the hands of the dynasty [the Amorian] to that of the Slavs. Basil the Slav received it in the epoch of Al-Mu'tazz in 253. He reigned twenty years."[137] While Hamza's remark seems almost innocuous by itself, the

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[135] See A. A. Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby (2 vols.; Saint Petersburg, 1900-1902) (the history from 813 with translation of passages from Arabic writers). There is a French edition: Byzance et les Arabes, Vol. I: La dynastie d'Amorium, ed. H. Grégoire, M. Canard, etc. (Brussels, 1935); Vol. II: La dynastie Macedonienne, ed. H. Grégoire and M. Canard. Part II, Extraits des sources Arabes, ed. M. Canard (Brussels, 1950), covers the years 820-959, with a translation of relevant passages from the Arab writers. The first part of Vol. II is in preparation. The French edition will hereafter be cited as Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes; when extracts are cited, Vasiliev, Extracts.

[136] Ḥamza al-Iṣfahān was born in 893 at Ispahan and died in the year 870. His major historical work was the Tawārih sinē mulūk al-ard wa'l-anbriyā (annals of the kings and prophets), which ended with the year 961. See C. Brockelmann, Geschichte der arabischen Literatur (Weimar and Berlin, 1898-1902), I, 145; also Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 46; P. Hitti, History of the Arabs (London, 1958), pp. 389-90.

[137] Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 47. His source was a judge called Waki who obtained his information from the work of a Byzantine emperor (could be Constantine VII).

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historian al-Tabarī has further corroborated this evidence by the explicitness of the following statement:[138] "In this year Basil, known as the Slav, assailed Michael, the son of Theophilus, Emperor of the Romans, and killed him. He was called a Slav although of noble ancestry because his mother was a Slav."[139] The evidence of Tabarī certainly enhances the position not only of the adherents of the Slavonic school but also of those who maintain Basil's Arsacid heritage.

Other contemporary authors assert Basil's Slavic ancestry; however, they are unanimous in rejecting his Arsacid lineage. For instance, the Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria, Eutychius,[140] makes the following remark about Basil: "He

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[138] Abū-Ğa'far-Muhammed-ibn-Ğarir-ibn-Yazīd-ibn-Kādir-ibn-Khālid-al-Tabarī was born in the autumn of the year 839 (224 A.H.) in the village of Amul not far from the Caspian Sea in the province of Tabaristan. There is a French edition and translation of his principal work, the Annales, in fifteen volumes by the Orientalist M. J. de Goeje (Leyden, 1879-1901). For literature, see M. J. de Goeje, "Tabari and the Early Arab Historians," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 9th ed., XXIII (1888), 3-4; Brockelmann, op. cit., I, 142-43; Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 278; Hitti, op. cit., pp. 390-91.

[139] Tabarī (de Goeje), III, 1858-59; Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 6. For other references to Basil as a Slav, see Tabari (de Goeje), III, 2026, 2105, and Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 8-9.

[140] Eutychius, known as Sa'īd ibn Batrīq, was born in 876 at Fustat. In his early life he was a physician like his father; however, he also enjoyed historical as well as theological pursuits. In 933 he became the Melkite Patriarch of Antioch, a position which he retained until his death in 940. For literature, see Brockelmann, op. cit., I, 148, and Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 24.

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was of Slavic origin but not of a royal family."[141] The noted geographer and historian Mas'ūdī[142] also sustains this opinion in his work, Muruj adh Dhahab,[143] and adds in another, the Kitāb al Tanbīh wa'l Išrāf, that Basil emigrated from his birthplace in Thrace to Constantinople in order to earn his livelihood.[144]

Except for being unanimous about Basil's Slavic ancestry, later Arab sources add little to our knowledge with respect to this problem. As a matter of fact, they paraphrase or summarize either one or another of the tenth-century historians.[145] The thirteenth-century chronicle of Ibn al-Aṯīr, for instance, simply repeats almost word for

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[141] Eutychii Patriarchae Alexandrine Annales, ed. L. Chiekho (I: 1906; II: 1909); see II, 67. There is an early Latin translation by Pocock (1685) which is reproduced in Migne P.G. 111. See also Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 25.

[142] Abū'l-Hasan-'Alī-ibn-al-Husaīn-ibn-Alī-al-Hudaīli-al-Mas'ūdī was born at Bagdad at the end of the ninth century and died at Fustat in 956 or 957. He was a distinguished and learned geographer and historian who travelled extensively. Among his most important works are Muruj adh Dhahab (Meadows of Gold) and Kitāb al Tanbīh wa'l Išhrāf (Book of Intelligence and of Review). For literature, see Brockelmann, op. cit., pp. 143-44; Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 326-28.

[143] Mas'ūdī, Les Prairies d'or, ed. and trans. Barbier de Meynard (Paris, 1861-1877), II, 352-53; also Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 38-39.

[144] Mas'ūdī, Kitāb al Tanbīh wa'l Išrāf, ed M. J. de Goeje and trans. B. Carra de Vaux (Paris, 1897), pp. 233-37. Mas'ūdī in this work states also that Basil's mother was a Slav. See also Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 395-96.

[145] On this subject, see Vasiliev, V.V., 12, 161-65.

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word the account of Tabarī.[146] No different is the universal history of the contemporary Sibṭ ibn al-Ǧauzī, whose account even includes Tabarī's chronological error:[147] "In the year 257 (A.H.) Michael, the son of Theophilus, died; he was killed by Basil the Slav, who was from the family of the Imperial house."[148] On the other hand, another contemporary, al-Makīn, preferred instead of Tabarī's the account of Eutychius of Alexandria.[149] Tabarī's influence, however, is unanimously apparent among the fifteenth-century

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[146]Ibn al-Aṯīr died in 1234; for the period 867 to 959 he is of considerable importance. For literature, see Brockelmann, op. cit., p. 57; Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 129-30. Amari translated the pertinent parts of this chronicle with respect to Sicily and Southern Italy in Bibliotheca arabo-sicula, Versione italiana (Turin and Rome, 1880), I, 385-424. There is also a French translation by Fagnan, Annales du Maghreb et de l'Espagne (Alger, 1901), which Vasiliev repeats, Extracts, II, 130-162. For this passage, see Amari, op. cit., p. 389; Fagnan, op. cit., p. 244; Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 132.

[147]Šams al-Sīn Abū l-Muẓaffar Yūsuf ibn Qizoġlū ibn ʿAbdallāh, called Sibṭ ibn al-Ǧauzī, was born in Bagdad in 1182 and died in 1257. His principal work is the Kitāb mirʾāt al-Zamān (Book of the Mirror of the Times), which included the period from Creation to 1256. For literature, see Brockelmann, op. cit., pp. 347-48; Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 163-65.

[148]Ibid., p. 165.

[149]Ǧirǧis ibn Abī l-Yāsir ibn Abī'l-Makārim al-Makīn ibn al-ʿAdīm was born in Cairo in 1205 and died in 1273. His most important work was the Kitāb al-Maǧmūʿ al-Mubārak, which went to the year 1250. For literature, see Brockelmann, op. cit., p. 348; Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 188; this passage in ibid., p. 189.

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writers Ibn Haldun,[150] Al-Aini,[151] and Abu 'l-Mahasin.[152]

From the evidence of the previous Arab sources, several factors are noticeably evident. First, only the tenth-century authorities are significant with respect to this problem. Furthermore, there is unanimity among all these sources concerning Basil's Slavic nationality. In addition, two of them, Tabari and Mas'udi, link this origin to his mother. Only Tabari, however, supports the emperor's royal ancestry. The central question which must be answered, however, is what the Arabs meant by the word "Slav." Although this question was answered by the eighteenth-century Orientalist D'Herbelot, many scholars have chosen to ignore his conclusions and have merely adhered to their own preconceived convictions.[153] The answer lies among the Arab sources themselves, which D'Herbelot knew but did not identify.[154] For example, the tenth-century geographer

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[150]Ibn Haldun, Kitab al-ibar; see Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 258. On Ibn Haldun, see the introduction to this work in F. Rosenthal, Ibn Khaldun (New York, 1958), pp. xxix-lxvii.

[151]Al-Aini (Badr al-Sin Abu Muhammad Mahmud ibn Ahmad) was born in the city of 'Aintab near Duluq-Soliche in 1360 and died in 1451. His principal work was the 'Igd al guman fi ahbar ahl al-Zaman. For literature, see Brockelmann, op. cit., pp. 52-53; Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 263-64. For the passage, ibid., p. 264.

[152]Abu 'l-Mahasin ibn Tagri-Bardi flourished in the fifteenth century (d. 1469). He was the Egyptian historian who wrote about the origin of the Mameluks. For literature, see Vasiliev, ibid., p. 269; for passage on Basil, ibid., p. 270.

[153]See section on Historiography, pp. 5, 7-10, 13, 18.

[154]D'Herbelot, op. cit.; see quote in n. 10, p. 6.

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Ibn Khordadhbeh described Macedonia as follows: "The limits of Macedonia are the long wall to the South, the Sea of Syria to the East, Bulgaria to the North, but to the West lies the country of the Slavs.[155] The thirteenth-century geographer Yakut, however, is even more explicit: "Slavonia is the country between Constantinople and Bulgaria."[156] Since Basil was born near Adrianople in Macedonia, an area known to the Arabs as a region heavily Slavonized, it is evident how the Arab authors could have easily accepted the opinion that he was of Slavic origin.[157] To the Arabs the words "Slav" and "Macedonian" were synonymous. As a result, Basil was to them al-Seclabi.

The Armenian Sources

While Arab sources are unanimously adamant in their conviction that Basil was of Slavic origin, this opinion is not shared by the Armenian historians. On the contrary, there is complete unanimity among Armenian writers that Basil was of Armenian origin. Furthermore, three different writers--Stephan of Taron (eleventh century),[158] Samuel of

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[155] Ibn Khordadhbeh, Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Lugsuni-Batavorum, 1809), VI, 77. See Hitti, op. cit., p. 385.

[156] Yakut, Geographisches Wortenbach, ed. Wustenfeld (Leipzig, 1818), III, 405. See, also, Hitti, op. cit., p. 386.

[157] On the Slavonization of Greece, see Bon, op. cit., pp. 27-70.

[158] E. Dulaurier, Histoire universelle par Etienne Acogh'ig de Daron (Paris, 1883), I, 172.

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Ani (twelfth century),[159] and Kiracos of Gantzac (thirteenth century)[160]--support the view that Basil originated in the village of Thil in the Armenian province of Taron. In addition, another thirteenth-century historian, Vardan, states that Basil belonged to the Arsacid family through his mother, who was an Armenian.[161] Although all these sources are considerably removed from the events of the Macedonian dynasty and have been shown to have derived some information from Greek sources, they do, nevertheless, confirm the evidence of the Byzantine authorities.[162] The Armenian sources should, therefore, be considered as being of supplementary value.

The Latin Sources

The problem of Basil's origin, on the whole, did not concern the majority of the Latin sources of the ninth and tenth centuries. Indeed, the only important Latin work which deals with this problem is Luidprand of Cremona's Antapodosis.[163] Having visited the Byzantine capital once in 949 as the emissary of Berengar II and in 968 as the

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[159] Samuel d'Ani, Tables Chronologigues, ed. and trans. Brosset in Collection d'historiens armeniens (Saint Petersburg, 1878), II, 427.

[160] Kiracos de Gantzac, Universal History, trans. Brosset, Deux historiens armeniens (Saint Petersburg, 1870), p. 42.

[161] See n. 86, p. 27.

[162] On the importance of the Armenian sources, see Adontz, Byzantion, 9, 246-59.

[163] On Luidprand, see the introduction by Wright, op. cit., pp. 1-24.

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envoy of Otto I, Luidprand had ample opportunity to collect information concerning the founder of the Macedonian dynasty.[164] Nevertheless, his opinions were markedly affected by a growing rivalry which had reawakened between the Eastern and Western Empires. Being somewhat apprehensive about the Byzantines, Luidprand in his account of Basil shows, therefore, a remarkable affinity to Symeon's account. In two different places in his work he consequently repeats the following:

> The August Emperor Basil, the present emperor's grandfather, was born of a humble family in Macedonia. Under the compelling yoke of poverty, he came down to Constantinople and was for a time servant to an abbot. The then Emperor Michael went one morning to pray in the monastery where he was serving, and seeing that he was exceptionally comely called the abbot, and asked him to give him the lad. He then took him off to the palace and made him his chamberlain; and in a little time he became so powerful that everyone called him the second emperor.[165]

Conclusion

From the study and analysis of the preceding sources which I have already discussed, I have reached the following conclusions concerning Basil I. First, with regard to his birth and origin only the contemporary Byzantine sources can be considered of cardinal importance. On the basis of these authorities it can be definitely said that Basil was of Armenian birth and humble origin. This argument, to be sure, can be sustained by three contemporary yet independent

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[164] Ibid., p. 11.

[165] Luidprand of Cremona, op. cit., pp. 36, 124.

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works--the anonymous poem, the Funeral Oration of Leo, and the Vita Euthymii. Second, the genealogical descent of Basil paternally from the Arsacids and maternally from both Alexander of Macedonia and Constantine the Great is obviously fictional. As the Vita Ignatii bears witness, this genealogy was created by Photius; however, additional elaborations were later included by Basil's grandson and his literary circle. Further evidence to substantiate my supposition can be found also in later derivative sources as well as in the anti-Macedonian tradition of Symeon the Logothete. Both of these are in complete accord not only over the fabricated genealogy but also over his humble origin. On the other hand, the Armenian sources, although they are later in origin, further substantiate Basil's Armenian birth. Third, the Slavonic theory of Basil's birth, which is periodically revived, rests on flimsy evidence, even though the Arab sources are unanimous about his Slavic birth. As I have already illustrated, the words "Slav" and "Macedonian" were synonymously employed by Arab authorities. Even the testimony of Tabari and Mas'udi that Basil's mother was a Slav is unconvincing. For instance, we know that her name was Pankalo which was shown to be Greek.[166] This evidence by itself is hardly convincing, but it is also known that at least two of Basil's brothers had traditional Armenian names.[167] Could a Slavic mother, therefore, have

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[166] De Ceremoniis, p. 648.

[167] Brothers Symbatius and Marianus are mentioned also in ibid.

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named her children Symbatius, Bardas, and Marianus?[168] To this would be added the fact that Basil's closest associates and friends were also Armenians.[169] The specter of racial purity, of course, is always difficult to prove, and in an area like Macedonia, where there was extensive Slavonization, scholars can, at will, raise innuendos. However, until some contemporary evidence is found which states that Basil or his parents were Slavs, the case must rest with my arguments above.

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[168] Adontz, Byzantion, 9, 256, has illustrated the fact that the name Symbatius was common among Bagratides, while Marianus was common among Easterners.

[169] His accomplices were mostly Armenians. See the description in Georgius Continuatus, op. cit., p. 837; see, also, Adontz, Byzantion, 9, 229-32.

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CHAPTER II

THE EARLY LIFE OF BASIL

The sparseness of the record of Basil's early life is disheartening, for no contemporary source survives. What serves for sources, principally, are the tenth-century authors, who seek either to enshrine Basil with a halo or to besmirch his character. The earliest of them is the historian Joseph Genesius. Although he wrote only about sixty years after the death of Basil, his account is devoid of any appreciable detail of the emperor's early life.[1] Even with respect to the time and place of Basil's birth, he says only that Basil departed from his native Macedonia in order to seek his fortune in the imperial capital.[2] In the accounts of Basil's grandson, the literateur Constantine VII, and the inimical Symeon the Logothete, however, the environs of Adrianople in the Thracian theme is referred to as Basil's birthplace.[3] Since this fact has been corroborated by later, derivative sources, many scholars have accepted

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[1]Genesius wrote his Basileiai between the years 944-948. Since Basil died in 886, Genesius' work was written approximately 58-62 years after the emperor's death. On this dating, see Bury, E.R.E., p. 460. There is a dispute over this dating, but I think that Bury's view is more valid. (See Chap. I, p. 29 (n. 94).

[2]Genesius, 107-08.

[3]Georgius Continuatus, 817_{10-15}.

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Adrianople, or its environs, as Basil's birthplace.[4] It is possible, also, that he was born in the small village of Charioupolis, as the testimony of a fourteenth-century source maintains.[5]

Of Basil's family little can be said. Even his father's name has been lost;[6] all that can be surmised of him is that he was a simple Armenian peasant who toiled by the sweat of his brow.[7] His mother, Pankalo, was apparently similarly of humble origin although a late Armenian source supports a contrary view.[8] Both of his parents were probably transferred, due to imperial policy, from the easternmost part part of the empire to Macedonian Thrace, where Basil was

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[4]Of the early scholars who are discussed in the preceding chapter, only Schlosser erroneously held that Basil was born in Thessalonika. As far as Adrianople is concerned, it was in the theme of Thrace. See C. Porphyrogenitus, De thematibus, ed. A. Pertusi (Rome, 1952), p. 86. According to P. Lemerle, Philippes et la Macédonie orientale à l'époque chrétienne et byzantine (Paris, 1945), pp. 122ff., there existed from the end of the eighth century the independent theme of Macedonia, which included the territory of Western Thrace.

[5]Charioupolis is mentioned only by John Lazaropoulos, the Metropolitan of Trapezunt (1350 A.D.). See Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 79.

[6]It is conceivable that it was overlooked on purpose by Constantine to hide the humble origin of his grandfather. Adontz makes some suppositions on what his name might have been; see Byzantion, 9, 244-45.

[7]The anonymous poet in Alexandri Lycopolitani, p. xvii, ll. 82-84, calls his parents simple but pious.

[8]De Ceremoniis, 648_{8-12}, is the only work where her name appears.

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born.[9] The Greek origin of his mother's name, on the other hand, suggests that her parents may have been transported to this region on an earlier occasion.[10]

The actual date of Basil's birth is likewise lost in the web of legends which has been neatly spun by Constantine VII and his literary circle. According to the former, while he was still an infant Basil and his entire family were gathered up by the swift descent of the Bulgars led by Khan Krum. This bellicose Bulgarian prince, described by a chronicler as a new Sennacherib, captured the city of Adrianople and carried away 10,000 of its inhabitants in 813 A.D.[11] A similar narrative is given by the anti-Macedonian Symeon the Logothete, who states that Basil was

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[9]The transfer of people from different regions of the empire was an important aspect of imperial policy, and was used for military, economic, and social reasons. For an illuminating study on this subject, see P. Charanis, "The Transfer of Population as a Policy in the Byzantine Empire," Comparative Studies in Society and History, 3 (1961), 140-54.

[10]See Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 66-67. That she was an Armenian is mentioned by Vardan, op. cit., p. 85.

[11]The account can be found in the Vita Basilii, 216-17. A similar but shorter version can also be found in Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 183-84, and in Zonaras, pp. 407-08. It can also be found in Constantine Manasses, 222; Michael Glycas, 546; Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 123. Contemporary sources also mention Krum's invasion in great detail. The chronographer Theophanes ends his history with it; Theophanes, Chronographia, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883), pp. 497-503. The most detailed acoount is in the contemporary Scriptor Incertus (Bonn, CSHB, 1842), 342-44. In addition, it can be found in the Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae, ed. H. Delehaye in Propylaea ad Acta Sanctorum Nov (Brussels, 1902), cols. 414, 416, and in the Menologium of Basil II, ed. Migne, P.G. 117, cols. 276D-277A.

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born in the region of Adrianople during the reign of Michael I (811-813) and was carried off into captivity by Krum after the capture of the city in 813.[12] In the face of the combined testimonies of Constantine and Symeon (which show hardly a trace of collaboration), the date of Basil's birth in the years 811-813 seems difficult to reject. Accordingly, numerous scholars have accepted this period as approximating the date of his birth. Among them: in the seventeenth century, the pioneer of Byzantine history, L. Cousin (1685);[13] in the eighteenth century, the French C. Le Beau (1757-1786)[14] and the Englishman Edward Gibbon (1776-1788);[15] in the nineteenth century, Fredrich Schlosser (1812),[16] George Finlay (1854),[17] Hergenröther (1867),[18] Paparrhegopulos (1867),[19] Hertzberg (1883),[20] and Carl de Boor (1888);[21] in the twentieth century, A. Vogt

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[12]Georgius Continuatus, 817 (chap. viii).

[13]L. Cousin, Histoire de Constantinople (Paris, 1685), III, 416, says he was born during the reign of Michael I (811-813).

[14]Le Beau, op. cit., pp. 180-82, says during Michael I's reign.

[15]Gibbon, op. cit., p. 215.

[16]Schlosser, op. cit., pp. 630-31, says in the year 813.

[17]Finlay, History of the Byzantine and Greek Empires, p. 272, says he was an infant in 813.

[18]Hergenröther, op. cit., p. 581, says he was born in 812.

[19]Paparregopulos, op. cit., p. 799.

[20]Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 146, says in the year 813.

[21]Vita Euthymii, 131, says in the year 812.

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(1908),[22] J. B. Bury (1912),[23] and Henri Grégoire (1964).[24]

The first doubts were raised in the mid-nineteenth century by W. Platt, an almost obscrue historian. In 1844, without substantiating his hypothesis, Platt argued that Basil was probably born in 826 A.D.[25] Similar doubts were also raised by Fr. Richter in 1856[26] and by E. Kurtz in 1897.[27] Their views met with little attention, however.

In 1912 the distinguished Orientalist E. W. Brooks became interested in the problem because of the many discrepancies in the accounts of Basil's life, especially the manner of his death, on a stag hunt[28]--reasoning that a man of seventy-three could hardly have participated in such a strenuous sport. Brooks felt that the answer to the problem lay in ascertaining the time of Basil's arrival in the capital and his introduction to Michael III. On this basis,

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[22]Vogt, Basile I, pp. 20-21, says in the reign of Michael I.

[23]Bury, E.R.E., p. 165, says about 812.

[24]H. Grégoire, "The Armenians and Macedonians 842-1025," in the new Cambridge Medieval History (Cambridge, 1966), IV, 116.

[25]W. Platt, "Basil I Macedo," in Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography (Boston, 1844), pp. 468-69.

[26]Fr. Richter, Geschlechts-Tafeln (1856), p. lxxviii (n. 4). He said that if he was born in 813 he would have been seventy-three at the time of his death, which is unsupported by authority.

[27]Vita Theophano, ed. E. Kurtz in Mémoires de l'Academie Imp. des Sciences de St. Petersbourg, VIII[e] series (1898), III, Part 2, 55 (n. 1).

[28]On the manner of Basil's death on a stag hunt, see Vita Euthymii, 8, and Vita Euthymii, Byzantion, 25-27, 8-11.

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his studies led him to believe that Basil was born sometime between the years 830 and 835.[29] Since Brooks, others have ventured differing opinions on this subject. A Greek scholar, Sp. Lampros, has come out in support of the year 829.[30] Louis Bréhier has supported Lampros' view, but has often misquoted the year as 827.[31] A re-examination of the problem by N. Adontz in 1933-1934 has led this noted Byzantinist to place Basil's birth in the year 836.[32] This has been accepted by K. Amantos[33] and R. J. H. Jenkins.[34] This later date has also received the support of the Hungarian Byzantinist Gyula Moravcsik, who has shown that Basil could not have been born before 817 in any case, even if one accepts Constantine's chronology.[35]

An answer to this entangled and elusive question lies somewhere in the legends surrounding Basil's youth. Consequently it is necessary to undertake a microscopic study of our accounts in order to separate historical facts from their legendary backgrounds. According to Constantine's

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[29]E. W. Brooks, "The Age of Basil I," B.Z., 20 (1911), 486-91.

[30]Sp. Lampros, "Χρονολογία Βασιλείου Μακεδόνος" Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων, 20 (1926), 292-93.

[31]Bréhier, op. cit., p. 121.

[32]Adontz, Byzantion, 8, 419-94.

[33]Amantos, op. cit., II, 23.

[34]Jenkins, Byzantium: The Imperial Centuries 610-1071, p. 165.

[35]Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 77.

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biography, the capture of Adrianople by Khan Krum resulted in the removal of the inhabitants together with their bishop, Manuel, to Bulgaria.[36] Among these captives were the infant Basil and his parents. In their new homeland on the Trans-Danubian frontier the Bishop Manuel and some of his colleagues undertook an active missionary enterprise which eventually came to the attention of Omurtag, Krum's successor, who interpreted such activity as subversive to Bulgarian interests. Consequently the bishop and his followers were subjected to torture and subsequently martyred.[37] The captives were peacefully repatriated and resettled in Macedonia sometime later through the intervention of the Byzantines.[38] According to Constantine, Basil was still a child at the time of his return (he calls him Παῖς).[39] In the derivative writers a similar but a more condensed version of this story is to be found. There is a noticeable exception in the common accounts of Scylitzes and Zonaras, however. Although both these sources borrowed primarily from

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[36] Vita Basilii, 216_{9-19}.

[37] Ibid., 216_{17}-217_{9}. There are, however, some discrepancies in the other sources over who martyred the Bishop Manuel. The Vita Basilii, of course, says it was undertaken by Omurtag. The Menologium of Basil II, op. cit., says Krum was responsible. On the other hand, the Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae, op. cit., says it was Krum's second successor.

[38] Krum died on Holy Thursday, April 13, 814 A.D., of a broken blood vessel in his head. See S. Runciman, The First Bulgarian Empire (London, 1930), p. 68. Omurtag succeeded his father, Krum, after a brief interlude in 815.

[39] Vita Basilii, 217_{9}-218_{2}, tells of the return.

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Constantine's biography, they nevertheless refer to Basil as an Ephebe at the time of his return.[40]

The same subject, treated by Symeon the Logothete, includes further significant deviations. After beginning with an account of the event which led to Basil's introduction to Michael III--namely, the horse-breaking feat--the chronicle digresses to give an account of Basil's origin.[41] Describing, first, the capture of Adrianople by Khan Krum and the transportation of the inhabitants, including Basil and his parents, to the Trans-Danubian region, Symeon then proceeds to give a vivid portrayal of the life of the Macedonians.[42] According to Symeon, the Macedonians apparently retained a certain degree of autonomy in this settlement, for they elected their own leader, Kordylas (he is called a στρατηλάτης).[43] The Macedonians yearned to return to their native land, but they needed assistance and an opportune moment. To ensure the former, Kordylas entrusted the care of his people to his son, Bardas, and proceeded to the imperial capital. Having obtained an audience from the Emperor Theophilus, Kordylas received the promise of naval assistance. Some time after his return the opportunity

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[40] Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 184_{19}-186_{17}; Zonaras, 407_{15}-408_{2}. Ephebe as used in the ancient world referred to a person who has just reached the age of responsibility, i.e., a person eighteen years old.

[41] Georgius Continuatus, 816-817_{7}.

[42] Ibid., pp. 817-18.

[43] Ibid., 818_{1-2} (ἦν στρατηλάτης ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ Κορδύλης.)

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presented itself--the Bulgarians broke their peace and attacked Thessalonika under Michael the Bulgarian. While the Bulgars were preoccupied in Thrace, the Macedonians began to cross the Danube in order to reach the imperial fleet.[44] The Bulgarian Comes in the region moved immediately to deter their progress. Anticipating the struggle, the Macedonians elected as their leaders Kordyles and Tzantzes, who defeated the Bulgarians in an initial engagement and took many prisoners. Frustrated by this setback the Bulgars called for aid from the Magyars (οὔγγροις) who were now living in this area.[45] At that very moment, the imperial flotilla arrived and the Macedonians prepared to embark. The Magyars (now called Τοῦρκοι) blocked their progress but offered to let them pass if they would hand over their goods and property. The Macedonians refused and made ready to fight, calling for aid to their patron saint, Adrian. For three days the Macedonians stood in battle readiness, but began to embark on the fourth day. When the Magyars saw this they attacked, but were defeated. On the next day a similar

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[44] Ibid., 818$_{7-15}$. The Bulgar Khan, he said, was Baldimer (τὴν δὲ ἀρχὴν βουλγαρίας ὁ βαλδίμερ ἐγγονος κρούμου, πατὴρ ἐυμεώνος), when Michael the Bulgarian attacked Thessalonika.

[45] On the Magyars in this area, recent evidence indicates that they were near this region; namely, between the Don and the Danube. See, on this, G. Moravcsik, "Hungary and Byzantium in the Middle Ages," in the new Cambridge Medieval History, IV, 567-69. On their early history and their migration, see G. Moravcsik, "Zur Geschichte der Onoguren," Ungarische Jahrbucher, 10 (1930), 53-90; C. A. Macartney, The Magyars in the Ninth Century (Cambridge, 1930); H. Grégoire, "Le nom et l'origine des Hongrois," Z.D.M.G., 91 (1937), 630ff.; Bury, E.R.E., pp. 423-26, 489-92.

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struggle ensued when the Macedonians again attempted to depart, but once more the Turks suffered a reverse. In this way, after three hard-fought battles, the Macedonians returned to their homeland.[46] Among those returning was Basil, whom Symeon describes as a young man of twenty-five.[47]

If the two accounts of Basil's birth and captivity are compared, both similarities and discrepancies are seen. First, as already noted, both Symeon and Constantine agree that Basil was born during Michael I's reign, and was soon after taken into captivity.[48] They disagree, however, as to the time and the manner of his return. According to Constantine he was still a child (παῖς); while Symeon says he was twenty-five years old.[49] If Basil was born during the reign of Michael I (811-813) and died on a stag hunt in 886, he must have been in the neighborhood of seventy-four or seventy-five years old at the time of his death.[50]

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[46]Georgius Continuatus, 818_{15}-819_{12}.

[47]Ibid., 818_{12-13}.

[48]Compare Vita Basilii, 216_{9-19}, with Georgius Continuatus, 817_{10-15}.

[49]Compare Vita Basilii, 217_{9-20}, with Georgius Continuatus, 819_{12-13}.

[50]The description of Basil's death on a stag hunt is given by the contemporary source, the Vita Euthymii, 1; Vita Euthymii, Byzantion, 25-27, 8-11. He died on the 29th of August, 886. According to the Vita Euthymii, the injury occurred nine days before his death. In another contemporary hagiographical source, the Vita Theophano, 1-24, Basil is referred to as of old age (γήρας). Before his death, for instance, the author says that he died "bent with illness and old age" (νόσῳ καὶ γήρᾳ καμφθείς); see chaps. 18, 20. This statement, however, should be taken with a grain of salt because of the rhetorical nature of the source. Consequently it could easily have applied to a man of fifty.

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Although it is highly improbable that a man of this age would indeed have participated in such a strenuous sport, it is not impossible, and, after all, Basil did die as a result of his ordeal. What causes more serious doubts are the terms used to describe Basil when he first appears at the court of Michael III.[51]

Since this took place in 857, or at the earliest 856, Basil would, then, have been forty-five or forty-six years old. Symeon's description of Basil at this time, however, refers to him as youthful (νεώτερον).[52] When Michael introduces Basil to his mother, Theordora, he is referred to as a youth (ἄγουρος).[53] Constantine in his biography also mentions that Basil was a young man (νεανίαν βασίλειον) when he was introduced to Michael III.[54] These descriptive terms are hardly consistent with middle age.

Greater loopholes appear in Constantine's genealogy. According to the Vita Basilii, Basil's grandfather, Maiktes,

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[51]Basil's arrival in the city is difficult to determine. All of the authorities, however, say he entered the service of Theophilitzes soon thereafter. Since Symeon says that it occurred after Michael's marriage while Theodora was still regent, the earliest date for his introduction to Michael could have been 855, for Theodora did not fall until 856. See Bury, E.R.E., p. 167 (n. 3). This problem will be dealt with in more detail later.

[52]Georgius Continuatus, 817_{1-2} (ἔχω νεώτερον ἐμπειρότατον καὶ ἀνδρειότατον εἰς τοὺς ἵππους, οἷον ἐπιποθεῖ ἡ βασιλείᾳ σου, τοὔνομα βασίλειον). There is a slight difference in the version printed by Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, $115A_{8-9}$ (ἔχω νεώτερον ἐμπειρότατον καὶ ἀνδρεῖον)

[53]Georgius Continuatus, 821_2; Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 121.

[54]Vita Basilii, 225_{7-8}.

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married a daughter of a certain Leo during the reign of Constantine VI and Irene (780-797). From this marriage was born Basil's father. If one assumes that the marriage was consummated at the end of this period, the birth of Basil in the reign of Michael I (811-813) seems highly unlikely.[55]

There are other significant discrepancies in these two accounts, especially in the manner of Basil's return. According to Constantine's narrative, Basil's return from captivity took place peacefully during the reign of Krum's successor, Omurtag.[56] Since it is known that the new Khan realized the futility of the struggle and brought it to an end in 815-816, Constantine's date for the return seems historically plausible.[57] There is, nevertheless, some cause for doubt in Constantine's description of the captivity and deliverance of the Macedonians. Moravcsik has shown that the picture which Constantine has drawn for his contemporaries has a remarkable likeness to the Exodus of the Jews from

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[55] If Basil's father was born, for instance, in the year 797 he would have had to have been a father at fourteen, which is highly unlikely.

[56] Ibid., 217_{9-20}.

[57] Apparently Omurtag's principal aims were the development of Bulgar power in the northwest together with the internal consolidation of his kingdom; therefore he concluded a thirty years' peace with the Byzantines. Thrace, as a result, was divided between the two powers; the boundaries ran along the so-called Great Wall between Adrianople and Philippopolis and then north to the Balkan Mountains. See, on this, Bury, E.R.E., pp. 359-63; J. B. Bury, "The Bulgarian Treaty of 814 A.D. and the Great Fence of Thrace," E.H.R., 25 (1910), 276-87; Runciman, The First Bulgarian Empire, pp. 71-75.

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Egypt,[58] and the "captivity and deliverance" theme was popular in Byzantine hagiographical and panegyrical literature.[59]

When one considers this fact, the colorful description of Basil's deliverance preserved by his grandson is still more dubious, and its legendary nature becomes clearly apparent. According to the Vita Basilii, just prior to the return of the Macedonians the child Basil was seen running back and forth by the Bulgar Khan Omurtag, who immediately noticed his noble character. The Khan called the child and sat him on his knee. He then gave him a wondrous apple.[60] By itself this action by the Bulgar prince seems a rather inconsequential gesture, yet to Constantine's contemporaries it had great significance. As has been shown by several scholars, the apple had symbolical meaning to the Byzantines, and it appears frequently in their folklore.[61] It was employed symbolically in the classical period to indicate

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[58]Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 77, has shown that Constantine has used the same words which are in Exo. 4:31. Compare with the Vita Basilii, 217_{9-11}.

[59]Emperors were often portrayed as either Moses or David. In this case Basil was the biblical Moses. In an earlier acoount, the anonymous poem, he was, however, depicted as the biblical David. In hagiography the theme appears, for instance, in the Vita S. Joannicii, Acta Sanctorum Nov II, 1 (Brussels, 1894), cols. 359B-360A.

[60]Vita Basilii, 217_{11-17}. Here again Constantine mentions the child Basil (παῖδα Βασίλειον) and the gift of the wonderful apple (μῆλον θαυμαστὸν).

[61]A. Alföldi, "Insignien und Tracht der romischen Kaiser," Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archaologischen Instituts, Romische Abteilung, 50 (1935), 117-20; P. E. Schram, "Sphaira, Globus, Reichsapfel," in Mélanges en l'honneur de Mon. Michel Andrieu (Strassburg, 1956), pp. 425-43.

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choice or selection. Paris gave Aphrodite a golden apple to designate her as more beautiful than her rivals, Hera and Athena. The apple continued to have a similar significance into the Byzantine era.[62] Throughout Byzantine history several examples of the apple motif can be found. In the fifth century there is the famous story of the Phrygian apple given the Emperor Theodosius II (408-450) by a peasant.[63] An even more famous story in which the apple figures in the classical sense is the bride show of the Emperor Theophilus (829-842).[64] According to Symeon, Euphrosyne, Theophilus' stepmother, in the spring of 821 assembled several maidens, who had been collected from all the provinces, in the so-called Pearl Chamber of the palace (μαργαρίτου Τρίκλινος). She then gave Theophilus a golden apple to bestow upon the girl who pleased him most. Stopping before Kasia, a woman of exceptional beauty and intellectual gifts, Theophilus

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[62]The story is told by several classical writers: Ovid Heroides v. 12-30; xvi. 149-52; Lucian Dialogues of the Gods 20.

[63]The story of the apple can be found in John Malalas, Chronographia, ed. I. Dindorf (Bonn, CSHB, 1831), 356-58.

[64]This story may have been known to Constantine. Bride shows, in general, had become common in the eighth and ninth centuries. For instance, the Vita Philareti, trans. and ed. M. H. Fourmy and M. Leroy, Byzantion, 9 (1934), 112-17, shows that royal messengers were sent into all the provinces on such an occasion and had orders to seek maidens of exceptional physical and mental qualities. Apparently certain fixed standards were used as guide lines in discovering Maria of Paphlagonia, who became the wife of Constantine VI. According to the Life of Irene, Michael III also used a beauty contest; see Vita S. Irenes, Acta Sanctorum Julii, VI, 603. In addition, Eudocia, the wife of Basil, managed a bride show for Leo VI; see Vita Theophano, 5.

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prepared to give her the apple, remarking cynically to her that woman was the source of man's tribulations. Her quick response, that a woman was, however, the source of man's regeneration, made the emperor reconsider. Theophilus, instead, bestowed the apple on Theodora.[65] So popular was this story in Byzantine folklore that there were several other versions of it. According to the Vita Theodorae, Theophilus selected seven maidens, and having given each an apple, summoned them again the next day. The emperor next asked each of them for the apple but only Theodora produced one, and offered a second with the following remark, "This first apple, which I have kept safe, is the symbol of my virginity. The second, do not decline it, is the fee of the son which shall be born to us." When Theophilus asked for an explanation of this riddle, she said that a holy man in Nicomedia had prophesized her elevation to the throne and had given her this apple.[66]

As in the above examples, the apple motif was selected by Constantine in his biography of Basil to convey a message well known to his contemporaries; namely, that Basil was "graced" to inherit the throne of the Roman Empire. This symbolism becomes even more obvious when one realizes that

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[65] Georgius Continuatus, 789_{18}-790_{11} (his remark, "Woman is the source of all man's tribulations," to which she responded, "and from a woman sprang the course of his regeneration"). The story is also in Leo Grammaticus, 213_{8-19}, and Pseudo-Symeon, 624_{17}-625_{5}.

[66] Vita Theodorae, ed. W. Regel, Analecta Byzantino-russica (Petropoli, 1891), pp. 4-5.

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the apple motif was synonymous with the globe or sphere motif.[67] The globe, as has been shown by several studies, expressed in a symbolic metaphor God's auctoritas. Depicted in the hands of the emperor, it represented the fact that he was the kosmokrator, while the cross affixed to it implied not only that all powers stemmed from him, but that he held his authority through faith in Christ.[68] Consequently Basil as advice to his son, Leo VI, says: "You have received the Empire from God."[69] Similarly, Constantine VII tells his son: "It is He who sets kings upon the throne and gives them the lordship over all."[70] The motif further symbolized that the emperor was endowed by it with a certain charisma which elevated him above his subjects. This conception had its origin in the Greco-Roman world and was expressed pictorially in the coinage of the first century A.D.[71] The

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[67]The globe and its relation to the emperor has been studied by several scholars. In addition to the literature already mentioned in n. 61, see A. Schlacter, "Der Globus," Stoicheia, 8 (1927), 64ff.; J. Deér, "Der Globus des spätrömischen und des byzantinischen Kaisers. Symbol order Ensigne?", B.Z., 54 (1961), 53-85.

[68]On the Byzantine conception of sovereignty, see O. Treitinger, Die Oströmische Kaiser und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung im höfischen Zeremoniell (Jena, 1938), pp. 34-38, 61-62, 114; J. B. Bury, "The Constitution of the Later Roman Empire," in Selected Essays of J. B. Bury, ed. H. Temperley (Cambridge, 1930).

[69]Paraenesis ad Leonen, ed. Migne, P.G. 107, p. xxv.

[70]De administrando imperio, 44$_{5-6}$.

[71]See M. P. Charlesworth, "Some Observations on the Ruler Cult Especially in Rome," Harvard Theological Review, 28 (1935), 5-44; A. D. Nock, "A Diis Electa," Harvard Theological Review, 23 (1930), 251-74.

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Emperor Vespasian (69-79), for example, handed a globe to his son, Titus (79-81), to indicate that he was providing for succession to the Roman world.[72] A broader meaning was given to this conception by the Emperor Aurelian (270-275). Addressing his troops, the emperor remarked that if they thought they were the source of his power they were mistaken, because God, not the army, had granted him sovereignty.[73] With the conversion of the Emperor Constantine (306-337), the Christian God became the bestower of the imperial auctoritas, yet the old traditions were symbolically passed on to the successors of Old Rome. In Suidas, for example, there is a description of a monument of Justinian I (527-565) depicting him holding a sphere with a cross on it, in his left hand. Suidas' explanation of the globe and cross is that they symbolized the earth over which the emperor ruled through faith in the Cross.[74] In a ninth-century manuscript

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[72]See H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham, Roman Imperial Coinage (London, 1927-1933), II, 128. Other examples: Trajan (98-117 A.D.), p. 246; Aurelian (270-275 A.D.), V, 268, 281.

[73]Peter the Patrician, ed. Muller, F.H.G., IV, 197. This passage was preserved in the works of Constantine VII: ὅτι Αὐρηλιανὸς πειραθεὶς ποτε στρατιωτικῆς ἐπαναστάσεως, ἔλεγεν ἀπατᾶσθαι τοὺς στρατιώτας, εἰ ἐν ταῖς αὐτῶν χερσὶ τὰς μοίρας εἶναι τῶν βασιλέων ὑπολαμβάνουσιν. ἔφασκε γὰρ τὸν Θεὸν δωρησάμενον τὴν πορφύραν πάντως καὶ τὸν χρόνον τῆς βασιλείας ὁρίσαι. In the same way, when Justin II crowned Tiberius he remarked, "Know that it is God who exalts you and confers this dignity not I." Theophanes, 248_{18-20}.

[74]Suidas, Lexicon Graece et Latine (Halis, 1853), II, cols. 1015_{11}-1016_{5} (

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illumination of Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil is depicted with a globe in his hand.[75] Later, other members of his family were likewise represented, his younger son Alexander on a mosaic in St. Sophia,[76] and his older son Leo VI in a relief.[77]

Taking this evidence into account, it becomes clear why Constantine chose this motif for his narrative. So popular was this incident in Byzantine folklore that the legend found expression in Byzantine art. In the Scylitzes-Cedrenus manuscript there is a miniature depicting Basil sitting on Omurtag's knee.[78]

In Symeon's account there are further deviations which are immediately evident. Unlike Constantine, Symeon states that Basil returned from captivity during the reign of Theophilus while Baldimer or Vladimir, the grandson of Krum

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[75]See representation 11 in Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15 (at end of article). There are other examples of Byzantine art where the emperor also holds a globe. See H. Pierce and R. Tyler, "Three Byzantine Works of Art," D.O.P., 2 (1941), 1ff.; P. A. Underwood, "First Preliminary Report on the Restoration of the Frescoes on the Kariye Camii at Istanbul by the Byzantine Institute: 1952-54," D.O.P., 9-10 (1956), 279-81.

[76]P. A. Underwood, "Notes on the Work of the Byzantine Institute in Istanbul: 1957-59," ibid., 14 (1960), 213-14.

[77]A. Grabar, L'empereur dans l'art Byzantin (Paris, 1936), plate XXIV. In Western art there are also several examples of how this symbolism was transmitted to the West. Three examples are noticeable in the Ottonian period: They are the Aachen Gospel, the Master of the Registrum Gregorii, and the Gospel from the Cathedral Treasury at Bamberg. There are also examples in Norman art. See O. Demus, The Mosaics of Norman Sicily (London, 1950), plate 76A.

[78]See representation 1 in Appendix.

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and father of Symeon, was Khan of the Bulgars.[79] He also records that the deliverance was not peaceful, but that hardships were endured by the Macedonians before they returned. He adds that Basil at the time of his return was twenty-five years old.[80]

On an examination of this account a number of anachronisms are vividly evident. First of all, the Bulgarian rulers, in order of their succession from Krum, are as follows: Duhum, Dicevg (814); Omurtag (814-831); Malomir (831-836); Presiam or Persian (836-852); and Boris-Michael (852-889).[81] There is no Baldimer or Vladimir recorded in this period. The only such personage that the chronicler could be referring to is a later Vladimir who was the borther, not the father, of Symeon (893-892) and who ruled in the period 889-893.[82] This Bulgarian ruler, therefore, falls outside the period of Basil's life.

To this must be added Symeon's description of the "deliverance" of the Macedonians. He states, for example, that a key factor facilitating the return of the captives was an expedition against Thessalonika which was led by a certain Michael the Bulgarian.[83] Since Michael is a Christian name, and it is known that the Bulgarians were not converted until 864, it would seem obvious that the conversion of such

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[79]Georgius Continuatus, 818_{7-8}. [80]Ibid., 819_{12-13}.

[81]Runciman, The First Bulgarian Empire, pp. 71-130.

[82]Ibid., pp. 133-37.

[83]Georgius Continuatus, 818_{10-11}.

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a high official is highly unlikely.[84] Consequently this information must also be classified as anachronistic.

Another curiosity is that all throughout Symeon's account of the "captivity and deliverance" of the Macedonians, he conspicuously does not make a single reference either to Basil or to his parents. On the other hand, Symeon records the heroic deeds of Kordylas,[85] Tzantzas,[86] and Leo Gomostron.[87]

From the above analyses, it must be concluded that both Symeon's and Constantine's narratives of Basil's birth and captivity are inaccurate.[88] This, of course, is not to deny that all of the recorded information is unhistorical. The fact that Krum captured Adrianople and transplanted its inhabitants along the Trans-Danubian frontier cannot be doubted, for it can be substantiated by two contemporary Greek accounts, the chronicle of Theophanes the Chronographer[89] and the so-called Scriptor Incertus.[90] In addition there are Bulgarian inscriptions in Greek to corroborate this.[91]

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[84] On the conversion of the Bulgars, see Runciman, The First Bulgarian Empire, pp. 99-130.

[85] Georgius Continuatus, 818_{14}. [86] Ibid., 818_{13}.

[87] Ibid., 819_{7-8}.

[88] Brooks, B.Z., 20, 486-91; Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 77.

[89] Theophanes, 497-503. [90] Scriptor Incertus, 342-44.

[91] See H. Grégoire and V. Beseviliev, "Les inscriptions protobulgares," Byzantion, 28 (1958), 313-33. H. Grégoire, "L'habitat primitif des Magyars et les ἑπτὰ βαρβαρικοὶ ἀσφαλοί," Byzantion, 13 (1938), 267-78, furthermore, believes that the folk names N. n. d. r. which are mentioned in the eleventh-century Gardizi are further proof of the Greeks settled on the Trans-Danubian frontier.

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The simple fact that Krum's expedition did take place is not sufficient justification for linking this event with Basil's birth. It is possible, of course, that Basil's parents were captive on this occasion or that Basil himself was made a prisoner by the Bulgars at a later time, forming an obvious basis for this legend.[92] It is even possible, as Adontz has suggested, that the legend was developed through Basil's ties with Stylianos Zaoutzes, who he believes was a descendent of the Macedonian leader Tzantzes.[93] To sum up, the only evidence we have supporting an early date is the brief notices in Symeon's and Constantine's accounts, to which can be added an isolated reference in the Vita Theophano, where Basil is referred to as old (γῆρος) at the time of his death. The word γῆρος by itself, however, is ambiguous, especially in such a rhetorical work.[94] On the other hand, the evidence seems overwhelming against an early date. First, both Symeon and Constantine disagree as to the chronology and the manner of Basil's return. Second, Constantine's description contains many legendary elements concerning the "deliverance" of the Macedonians. Third, Symeon's account contains too many anachronisms which cannot be explained. Fourth, there is the silence of Symeon about

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[92]This view has been suggested by many scholars, among them Brooks, Moravcsik, etc.

[93]Adontz, Byzantion, 8, 482-83.

[94]See n. 50 in this chapter.

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the role of Basil or his parents in the so-called "deliverance." Finally, there is the total silence of Genesius.[95]

An attempt at resolving this controversial problem must be made here, and I believe that the answer lies in Symeon's account. Recently a study on the Logothete's chronicle by Jenkins has shown conclusively that Symeon relied on a series of annals which recorded events in their true chronological sequence.[96] As a result, he has illustrated that once the basic data of the Logothete's chronicle are isolated from his usual digressions they constitute an absolute chronological criterion. This must be kept in mind in following Symeon's account: Michael, shortly after his marriage, received an unmanageable thoroughbred. Seeing that Michael was frustrated in his attempts to break the horse in, Theophilitzes introduces to Michael a young man skilled in horses who is in his service.[97] This man is none other than Basil. Then begins Symeon's long digression on the "captivity and deliverance" theme which I have already described.[98] Upon completion of this excursus Symeon haphazardly inserts the fact that Basil was twenty-five years old at the time and that he entered the service of Tzantzes.[99]

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[95]Genesius, 107-08. [96]Jenkins, D.O.P., 19, 91ff.

[97]Georgius Continuatus, 816_{7-14}, describes the marriage of Michael. The horse episode begins: 816_{15-22}.

[98]Basil is introduced: ibid., 817_{1-2}.

[99]Digression of deliverance theme: ibid., $817\text{-}819_{12}$.

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Without describing any further details of Basil's service with the Macedonian strategos, Symeon turns to another digression; namely, to the arrival of Basil in the capital and the monastery scene. This later account ends with the expression ὡς οὖν προείρηται and Symeon returns to his original point of departure; that is, Basil's introduction to Michael by Theophilitzes.[100] Upon a close examination of the two digressions, Symeon's narrative seems to have little continuity, as if the chronicler combined his narrative from two sources. In addition, his dating for Basil appears as a parenthetic insertion having no bearing on the two digressions. Conjecturally, this information could therefore be data which the chronicler derived from his annalistic source. If this is the case, the chronological information can only refer to Basil's entry into the service of Tzantzes. Since it is known that Basil shortly thereafter decided to seek his fortune in Constantinople, the next point of reference can only be the entry of Basil into the service of Theophilitzes. When Basil entered this service is not known for certain. However, it may be surmised from Constantine's narrative that Basil could hardly have remained with him for more than a year. This would make Basil approximately twenty-six by Symeon's chronology. The Byzantines, however, reckoned one's birthday from the day of birth, which would

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[100] Then a new digression of Basil with monastery scene; ibid., 819_{15}-820_{24}.

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make Basil twenty-five.[101] The birth of Basil can now be determined if one can only establish the time of Basil's first meeting with Michael. According to Symeon this event took place not long after the marriage of Michael to Eudocia Decapolites.[102] Since this took place in 855, Basil could not have met the emperor prior to this date. The next point of reference is Basil's introduction to Theodora. Since she fell from power during the coup d'etat against Theoctistus but was not expelled from the palace until August-September, 857, Basil must have met her prior to this event.[103] If my hypothesis is correct, Basil was borr between the years 830 and 832. I favor the later date for it is more in accord with the account of Constantine. According to the latter, Basil accompanied Theophilitzes on a mission to the Peloponnesus just prior to his introduction to Michael.[104] Since Theophilitzes was under orders from the Emperor Michael and Caesar Bardas, the date of this mission could have been no earlier than mid-856.[105] If the mission took several months, as it appears, Basil could not have returned until

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[101] A. Toynbee, "The Growth of Sparta," J.H.S., 33 (1913), 261, says it was true of all the Greeks.

[102] Georgius Continuatus, 816.

[103] Ibid., 821_{1-5}. F. Halkin has discovered the exact date of Theoctistus' death in the Synaxarion. It occurred on the 20th of November, 855. Theodora was expelled in August-September, 857. F. Halkin, "Trois dates historiques précises grâce au Synaxaire," Byzantion, 24 (1954), 7-17.

[104] Vita Basilii, 226_{7-10}.

[105] Michael became emperor in March, 856.

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the end of 856 or early 857. This would more accurately place Basil's birth in the year 831-832.

This supposition is strengthened by the following factors. It is well known that Basil and Michael later became boon companions. Since the latter was born about 835-836, the year 831-832 would also appear even more probable because of only a slight age differential between the two men.[106] This may also explain why Basil first served Theophilitzes in the capacity of groom, a position which would hardly be likely for a man of forty-five or more.[107] To this can be added the fact that the Life of Gregory of Decapolites records an invasion of Macedonia by the Bulgars.[108] Since this took place approximately in the year 836-837, when Theophilus was emperor, it is tempting to associate this incident with Symeon's invasion under Michael the Bulgarian. Is it not possible that Basil or his family were taken into captivity at this time? Could not an incident such as this later been used by Constantine as the kernel of his story and associated with Krum's invasion to enhance the "captivity and deliverance" theme? Whatever the answer, the truth will probably never be known. It nevertheless is

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[106] On the age of Michael, see Ostrogorsky, op. cit., p. 194 (n. 1). This would also be in agreement with Thecla being given to Basil as a mistress in 864. She would be about thirty, Basil about thirty-two.

[107] Genesius, 109.

[108] F. Dvornik, La Vie de Saint Grégoire le Decapolite et les Slaves Macédoniens au IX^e siècle (Paris, 1926), pp. 39-40.

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interesting to speculate. The date 831-832 would make Basil four or five at the time of this invasion. Is this not consistent with the picture which Constantine has painted, of a little boy sitting on the knee of the Bulgar Khan?

An attempt to reconstruct the period of Basil's life between the time of his birth and his arrival in Constantinople can certainly be exasperating. One factor above all has contributed to this problem; namely, the diverse portents, prophecies, and dreams which were interwoven into his life by the court historians of the tenth century in order to create a dramatic effect illuminating God's charisma toward Basil. From these prodigies, however, one can glean a certain amount of historical truth and, more significantly, one can perceive the deep religiosity which permeated and affected every aspect of Byzantine society. One aspect of this was the manifestation of God. To the Byzantines the Deity was no abstract principle, regardless of what learned men thought, but an active force very much in evidence all around them. Even with respect to the imperial office, God's auctoritas was clearly evident to the citizens of New Rome, who viewed the emperor as God's representative on earth. It is in this light that Basil is portrayed by virtually all our sources. Even our earliest source, the anonymous poem, exhibits this tendency and emphatically states that Basil was chosen, through Christ, as a ruler.[109] Leo the Wise, Basil's son and successor, repeats over and

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[109]Alexander Lycopolitani, xvi_{63}-$xvii_{9}$.

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over again that his father was chosen by God to rule, and adds that throughout his life he was guided by his predestination.[110] It is in the Basileiai of Genesius[111] and the Vita Basilii of Constantine that this theme becomes most pronounced.[112] To this must be added another conviction which the Byzantines had; namely, that God not only worked through intermediaries like the Virgin and various saints to cure diseases,[113] eliminate famines,[114] end droughts,[115] and protect cities,[116] but that He through different signs also foretold to the whole world the destiny of individuals.[117]

Signs, prophecies, and dreams are seen in profusion during Basil's formative years, illustrating to the beholder

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[110] Funeral Oration, 46_{11}, 50_{8-14}, 52_{27}-54_{5}.

[111] Genesius, 111_{3-4}, 113_{12}.

[112] Vita Basilii, 217_{21}-218_{2}, 219_{3-9}, 222_{8-14}, 228_{10-14}, 234_{4-6}, 256_{8-12}.

[113] "Life of Theodore of Sykeon," in Three Byzantine Saints, trans N. Baynes and E. Dawes (Oxford, 1958), pp. 91-92, 130, 146-49, 156, 158-59, 181.

[114] Ibid., p. 157. [115] Ibid., p. 155.

[116] In the protection of Constantinople, the Virgin was often called to protect the city. See Photius, Homilies, III and IV, 74-110. For literature, see N. Baynes, "The Supernatural Defenders of Constantinople," Analecta Bollandiana, 67 (1949), 165-77. In the same fashion, St. Demetrius was invoked by the inhabitants of Thessalonika and St. Adrian by the Macedonians.

[117] Genesius, 8, for example, tells us the story of the hermit of Philmelion who was consulted by Bardanes Turcus to determine whether his revolt against Nicephorus I (802-811) would be successful or not. According to Genesius, the hermit foretold not only the failure of Bardanes but also Thomas the Slav. On the other hand, he foretold the accession of Leo V and Michael II. On another occasion, Genesius relates how a slave girl foretold the fall of Michael I (811-813); ibid., 10. Theophanes Continuatus, 19, in a similar fashion tells that many signs foretold the fall of Leo V (813-820).

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God's charisma and auctoritas. Basil's son, Leo the Wise, and the court historian Genesius mention several.[118] It is in the hands of his grandson that this idea comes to the forefront. Beginning with his grandfather's infancy, Constantine relates that two early signs foretold Basil's greatness: a red band appeared on his head when his first hair grew in, and his swathing band became purple.[119]

The story which is employed foremost by Constantine to illustrate his grandfather's destiny for greatness but also the working hand of God is the scene shortly after his return from captivity. According to Constantine, when Basil was still a helpless infant[120] and his parents were away watching workers in the field, a "tent" of shields was constructed to protect the child from the midday sun. Suddenly an eagle appeared in the sky and hovered over the child with wings outstretched as if to shield him from the sun's rays. Some people, seeing this, made a loud clamor in order to scare the bird away. Informed of the danger, Basil's mother ran to her child and threw some stones at the eagle. When it departed, she returned to the fields. The scene, strangely enough, repeated itself not once but on two more occasions. As a result, Constantine makes the following concluding remark: "The scene repeated itself three times to indicate

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[118] Funeral Oration, 46_{25}-48_{1}, 50_{8-14}, 52_{27}-54_{5}, 54_{26}-56_{2}.

[119] Vita Basilii, 216_{4-8}.

[120] This contradicts Constantine's own scene which preceded this; namely, the scene of Basil and Omurtag (see above).

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for all who saw it that it was not just a common occurrence but a heavenly sign. Thus God in advance often foretells great events."[121] Constantine also informs us that an eagle shadowed his grandfather on many other occasions while he was asleep.[122] Scylitzes and later derivative writers also relate this story in longer or shorter variations.[123] In addition, the scene is represented on a miniature of the Madrid Scylitzes manuscript.[124] The description of this scene by the historian Genesius is somewhat different. According to him, Basil's mother was told that while Basil was playing with some other children, an eagle swooped down on his head and shadowed him with its wings.[125]

As in the motif of the apple, the eagle was selected because its charismatic symbolism was well understood by Constantine's contemporaries. Its origin can be traced far back into Greco-Roman tradition, where from time immemorial its appearance denoted protection, victory, and future greatness. It can be seen in several examples as a protective symbol. Athenaeus, for instance, records that an eagle

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[121] Ibid., 218_{2}-219_{8}.

[122] Ibid., 219_{9-15}. Constantine describes his home as ἐν οἰκίᾳ λιτῇ καὶ δημοτικῇ

[123] Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 186_{21}-187_{24}. It also occurs in later chronicles but the account is merely a summarization, adding little. See Zonaras, 408_{13}-409_{5}; Michael Glycas, 547_{7-14}; Ephraim, 111_{22-23}.

[124] Scylitzes-Cedrenus; see Appendix at rear, representation 2.

[125] Genesius, 108_{13-16}.

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fed Zeus on Crete by drawing nectar from a rock and bringing it to him in its beak.[126] In a similar fashion Aelian says Achaemenes, the founder of the Achaemenid dynasty, was nursed by an eagle.[127] According to Suidas, the forefather of the Ptolemies, Lagos, was not only protected from the sun and rain by an eagle, but nourished by it with the blood of a quail.[128] Delehaye has demonstrated that the eagle as a protective symbol was later transmitted to hagiographical literature in the lives of Saints Bertulphus, Medardus, and Servatius.[129]

The eagle appears as a victory symbol, but less frequently. Q. Curtius Rufus, for example, records that the entourage of Alexander the Great saw an eagle hovering over the king's head during the Battle of Gaugamela. It could not be frightened away either by the rattle of weapons or the cries of the dying. When a soothsayer was consulted about this sign he assured them they had no cause for fear but would be victorious that day.[130]

It is as a prophetic bird that the eagle is best known, and many examples of it foretelling the future

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[126]Athenaeus XI. 80. 491b in Loeb Classical Library (LCL), 186-87.

[127]Aelian De natura animalium XII. 21, in LCL, III, 38-41.

[128]Suidas, II, 485.

[129]H. Delehaye, Les légendes hagiographiques (Brussels, 1927), pp. 28ff.

[130]Q. Curtius Rufus, History of Alexander III, pp. 3, 17.

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greatness of an individual can be seen, from Greco-Roman mythology to the Byzantine era. According to Lactantius, Jupiter himself was informed of his future rule by an eagle.[131] The future greatness of King Midas was announced to his father Gordius in a similar manner. This recounted by Arrian in the following story:

> It was said that Gordius was a poor man among the Ancient Phrygians, who had a small piece of land to till, and two yoke of oxen. . . . On one occasion, while he was ploughing, an eagle settled upon the yoke, and remained sitting there until time came for unyoking the oxen. Being alarmed by the sight he went to the Telmissian soothsayers to consult them about the sign from the deity. . . . Near a certain village of the Telmissians, he met a maiden fetching water from the spring, and to her he related how the sign of the eagle had appeared to him. As she was of the prophetic race, she instructed him to return to the very spot and offer sacrifice to Zeus the King. Gordius requested her to accompany him and direct him how to perform the sacrifice. He offered the sacrifice in the way the girl suggested, and afterwards married her. A son was born to them named Midas. . . . Later he was made King of Phrygia.[132]

According to Nicholas of Damascus it was prophesied to the consort of Sadyattes, King of Lydia, that she would become the wife of two kings when two eagles entered their hall.[133] The historian Justin also records how an omen foretold the future greatness of Alexander the Great: "Two eagles sat the whole of the day on which he was born on the top of his father's palace, giving indication of his double empire over

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[131]Lactantius Opera Omnia i, ed. S. Brandt, in Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum (Pragae-Vindobonae-Lipsiae, 1890), XIX, 48.

[132]Arrian Anabasis II. 3.

[133]Nicholas of Damascus, Fragment 47, in F. Jacoby, Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker (Berlin, 1926), II, A, 349.

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Europe and Asia."[134] In Roman history, too, there are many examples. When Tarquinius Priscus and his wife Tanaquil were en route from Etruria to Rome, an eagle removed his headdress but returned it. His wife interpreted this as an omen of his accession to the throne.[135] Plutarch also relates how an eagle foretold Marius' greatness:

> For when he was yet but very young, and lived in the country, he caught in the skirt of his garment an eagle's nest, as it was falling, in which were seven young ones, which his parents seeing and much admiring, consulted the augurs about it, who told them he should become the greatest man in the world, and that the father had decreed he should seven times be possessed of the supreme power and authority.[136]

In his history, Suetonius mentions the eagle story twice. First, in reference to Tiberius: "A few days before his recall an eagle, a bird never before seen in Rhodes, perched upon the roof of his house."[137] Second, with respect to Claudius: "While under Gaius he began his official career and it chanced that as he entered the Forum for the first time with the Fasces, an eagle lit upon his shoulder."[138]

In the Scriptoris historiae Augustae the eagle motif is employed to predict future greatness. With respect to Diadumenus Antoninus it says: "And it is well known, besides, that on the very day of his birth an eagle brought to him

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[134]Justin, History of the World, trans. J. Watson in Bohn Library (London, 1876), XII, XVI, 120.

[135]Livy History of Rome I. 34, in LCL, I, 124-27.

[136]Plutarch Life of Marius 17, in LCL, pp. 564-65.

[137]Suetonius Tiberius XIV, in LCL, I, 314-17.

[138]Suetonius Claudius VII, in LCL, II, 14-17.

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gently a tiny royal ringdove, and, after placing it in his cradle as he slept, flew away without doing him harm."[139] He relates further: "Moreover, when he was walking about in the open, an eagle bore away his cap, and when the child's comrades shouted out, the bird set it upon the statue of a king on a royal monument near the farm house in which his father then lived."[140] At Maximus' birth this same source records a similar occurrence:

> An eagle, it is said, dropped a piece of beef--and a big one, too--into their dwelling where a narrow aperture lay open to the sky, and later, when it lay there, no one daring to touch it through superstitious fear, it picked it up again and carried it off to the nearest shrine, which was that of Jupiter Praestes.[141]

The Emperor Aurelian also: "This too is related, that Aurelian, while wrapped in swathing clothes was lifted out by an eagle, but without suffering harm, and was laid on an altar in a neighboring place which happened to have no fire upon it."[142]

The eagle motif was inherited by the Byzantines. The historian Procopius, for instance, relates the following incident concerning the future Emperor Marcian:

> So the Vandals, having wrested Libya from the Romans in this way, made it their own. And those of the enemy whom they took alive they reduced to slavery and held

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[139] Scriptores historiae Augustae, Diadumenus Antoninus 4. 6, in LCL, I, 90-91.

[140] Ibid., 5. 2, in LCL, I, 90-91.

[141] Scriptores historiae Augustae, Maximus et Balbinus 5. 3, in LCL, II, 456-57.

[142] Scriptores historiae Augustae, Aurelius 4. 6, in LCL, III, 200-01.

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> under guard. Among these happened to be Marcian, who later upon the death of Theodosius assumed the imperial power. At that time, however, Gizeric commanded that the captives be brought into the King's courtyard, in order that it might be possible for him, by looking at them, to know what master each of them might serve without degradation. And when they were gathered under the open sky, about midday, the season being summer, they were distressed by the sun and sat down. And somewhere or other among them Marcian, quite neglected, was sleeping. Then an eagle flew over him spreading out his wings, as they say, and always remaining in the same place in the air he cast a shadow over Marcian alone. And Gizeric, upon seeing from the upper story what was happening, since he was an exceedingly discerning person, suspected that the thing was a divine manifestation and summoned the man, inquired of him who he might be. And he replied that he was a confidential advisor of Aspar. . . . And when Gizeric heard this and considered first the meaning of the bird's action . . . it became evident to him that the man was being led to royal power. He therefore by no means deemed it right to kill him, reasoning that, if he should remove him from the world, it would be very clear that the thing which the bird had done was nothing (for he would not honour with his shadow a king who was about to die), and he felt, too, that he would be killing him for no good cause; and if, on the other hand, it was fated that in later times the man should become king, it would never be within his power to inflict death upon him; for that which has been decided by God could never be prevented by a man's decision.[143]

An even more famous story about Marcian is told by the chronographer Theophanes. According to him, Marcian, like Basil, was of simple origin and served as a common soldier (λιτὸς στρατιώτης) in the Persian wars. One day he made the acquaintance of two brothers, Julius and Tatianus, who were from the Lydian city of Sidema, and decided to go hunting with them. Exhaustion from the ordeal made them tired and sleep overtook them at noon. When one of the brothers awakened, however, he noticed that an eagle with

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[143]Procopius History of the Wars, iii: The Vandalic War 4. 1-10, in LCL, pp. 34-37.

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outstretched wings shadowed Marcian from above. He then awakened his brother to show him this miracle, and when Marcian awoke they asked him this question: "What will you give us when you become emperor?" Astonished at first, Marcian replied that if this would happen through the Grace of God, he would proclaim them as fathers. The brothers then gave him 200 nomismata and bade him farewell with these words: "Go to Constantinople and remember us when God will raise you to the Throne."[144] On another occasion Theophanes records that the Emperor Tiberius III (698-705) exiled Philippicus because he told of a dream in which an eagle had shaded his head.[145] In hagiographical literature, too, one can see that the future of the Empress Theophano, the wife of Leo VI, was foretold by an eagle which tried to get in through a window of her parents' house when she was born.[146]

From the above examples one can see not only how the eagle motif was transmitted in Byzantine literature, but even more significant, how it was interpreted by contemporaries. To conclude that Constantine was influenced by all these previous examples surely is ludicrous, but this is hardly necessary. His literary background was extensive, and he must have been acquainted with many traditional Greek

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[144] Theophanes, 104_{1-19}. So popular was this story that it is also found in later writers: Leo Grammaticus, 112_{5-14}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, I, 603_{11}-604_{5}; Zonaras, 113_{10}-114_{8}.

[145] Ibid., 372_{7-11}.

[146] Vita Theophano, 3_{3-5}. See, also, G. da Costa-Louillet, "Saints de Constantinople aux VIII^{e}, IX^{e} et X^{e} siècles," Byzantion, 25-27 (1955-1957), 823-36.

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accounts which were a part of the Byzantine heritage.[147] It has already been noted how Plutarchian models influenced the history of Theophanes Continuatus, which was composed under Constantine's auspices. In addition, parallels between his own Vita Basilii and the Vita Augustae of Nicholas of Damascus have also been mentioned earlier.

Constantine may also have intended further symbolism in the number three. As employed by him, this may have been a symbol intended to underscore God's grace toward his grandfather. The symbolism of the number three has ancient origins. For instance, it appears over and over again in the Bible: "And Saul send messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also."[148] "And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times."[149] In the Greco-Roman tradition, one observes a similar significance, for Nicholas of Damascus tells us that Caesar was offered the crown three times but refused it each time.[150]

Since many of Constantine's works show a profuse biblical background, and it is known furthermore that he excerpted and thereby preserved much of Nicholas, one can conjecture to some degree both how and why these symbols are found in the Vita Basilii. Further evidence can be derived

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[147] See literature on Constantine in Chapter I.

[148] Sam. 19:21. [149] Ibid., 20:41.

[150] Nicholas of Damascus, Life of Augustus, 37_{21}. First Licinius offered it once and M. Antony offered it twice.

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from the fact that the eagle motif became a sort of imperial household symbol for Basil. Constantine, for example, describes some mosaics which Basil had made to represent his battles and war deeds. There were four eagles represented on them, so life-like that they seemed to fly.[151] Constantine, in addition, records that the imperial halls which were built by Basil also bore the name "eagle" (ἀετοῦ).[152]

From the obscurity of these legendary details a general picture emerges of what Basil's life was really like. Since he was born, first of all, in Macedonian Thrace of humble parents, his early life can conjecturally be described as simple, hard, and monotonous. From Constantine's description, moreover, it is quite apparent that Basil's parents were small proprietors who may have had some workers or slaves. During harvesting and planting, however, Pankalo, Basil's mother, had to assist her husband in the fields, indicating that they were not really prosperous enough to employ much help.[153] Perhaps this is why she so promptly returned to her husband's side once the eagle departed. Life for Basil and his family, therefore, offered few comforts and little variety. Their house, which Constantine calls οἰκίᾳ λιτῇ καὶ δημοτικῇ, was probably little more than a shack built of sun-dried bricks. Their diet was simple, consisting of bread, cheese, olives,

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[151] Vita Basilii, 333_{8-10}. [152] Ibid., 335_{14-20}.

[153] Ibid., 220_{21}. Constantine also mentions that they had a small flock.

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vegetables and, occasionally, meat. There were few diversions, and the day began at sunrise and ended at sunset except for a brief siesta during the hottest part of the day. By modern standards their lot was hardly enviable.[154] As a matter of fact the standard of living must have been marginal, for there were three other children to feed--Symbatius, Marianus, and Bardas.[155]

Some time during his early life Basil's father died prematurely, and he was entrusted with the responsibilities of supporting his widowed mother and younger brothers.[156] The livelihood that was derived from the farm was probably just above subsistence. As a consequence he decided to seek his fortune elsewhere, and entered the service of Tzantzes, the strategos, or governor, of Macedonia.[157] His length of service with this official was of short duration, for it is quickly passed over by Symeon and ignored altogether by Constantine. At any rate, after some soul-seeking

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[154] I have reconstructed this picture from Constantine's description, using several studies which have been done on life (in general) in Byzantium. They are P. Charanis, "Some Aspects of Daily Life in Byzantium," Greek Orthodox Theological Review, 8 (1962-1963), 53-70; J. Hussey, The Byzantine World (New York, 1961), pp. 131-44; A. Andreades, "The Economic Life of the Byzantine Empire," in N. Baynes and S. Moss, Byzantium (Oxford, 1953), pp. 51-85.

[155] De Ceremoniis, 648, mentions Marianus and Symbatius (Μαριανὸς ὀγεγουὼς δομεστικος τῶν σχολῶν καὶ Συμβάτιος ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ, ἀμφότεροι ἀδελφοὶ βασιλείου τοῦ φιλοχριστου δεσπότου), but Theodosius of Melitene, 170, adds Bardas as well (Μαριανὸς ἀδελφὸς αὐτου καὶ Συμβάτιος καὶ Βάρδας ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ).

[156] Vita Basilii, 220_{15}-221_{18}.

[157] Georgius Continuatus, 819_{13-15}.

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and deliberation Basil decided to further his ambitions by going to Constantinople. Perhaps Tzantzes himself suggested to Basil that he could better satisfy his ambition in the capital, where there were many influential Armenians like himself.[158] If this man, moreover, was related to S. Zaoutzes (a later associate of Basil) as Adontz has suggested, it may be that Tzantzes even gave him a recommendation. This seems even more plausible when one considers the fact that there existed in the capital, to adapt a modern expression, an "Armenian Mafia."[159] Were these the aristocrats Constantine says Basil went to serve?[160]

In order to further illustrate the grace of God toward his grandfather, Constantine's description of Basil's departure is treated again in symbolic fashion, with dreams and fashions playing a significant role. According to the Vita Basilii, Basil spent some time deliberating about going to Constantinople. At first his mother was opposed, but her opposition softened when she had a dream. In it, she saw a vine grow into a tremendous plant, full of flowers and fruits, whose trunk, branches, and leaves were of gold. When she related this dream, she was informed that it foretold

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[158] Charanis, The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire, pp. 23-28.

[159] Tzantzes was an Armenian. Theodora's family was Armenian as well, at least on her father's side; her brothers were Bardas and Petronas. There were many other Armenians as well; see n. 157.

[160] Vita Basilii, 223_{5-8}.

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the great success of her son.[161] Genesius also records Pankalo's reluctance to let her son go to the capital until she had a similar dream. In it, like Andame, she saw a vine grow into a great plant which covered her house with flowers. As in Constantine's story, its trunk, branches, and leaves were of gold. The prophecy reinforced and encouraged her to believe that her son would not only become emperor but that a great number of offspring would make the empire rich.[162]

Like other motifs, the vine, too, had a charismatic significance for the Byzantines, and its origin, also, is in their Greco-Roman heritage. A few examples will illustrate this. The Greek tragedian Sophocles, for example, records that Clytemnestra had the following dream:

> Tis said that she beheld our sire, restored to the sunlight, at her side once more; then he took the sceptre--once his own, but now borne by Aegisthus--and planted it at the hearth; and thence a fruitful bough sprang upward, wherewith the whole land of Mycenae was overshadowed.[163]

It appears that the accounts of Genesius and Constantine are more directly derived from Herodotus:

> Thus Cambyses wedded Mandane, and took her to his home, after which, in the very first year, Astyages saw another vision. He fancied that a vine grew from the womb of his daughter, and overshadowed the whole of Asia. After this dream, which he submitted also to the interpreters, he sent to Persia and fetched away Mandane who was now with child and was not far from her time. On her arrival he set a watch over her, intending to destroy the child to which she should give birth; for

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[161] Ibid., 222_{2-14}; he says that the dream was like one which Cyrus' mother had.

[162] Genesius, 108_{4-16}. [163] Sophocles Electra 417-23.

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> the Magian interpreters had expounded the vision to foreshadow that the offspring of his daughter would reign over Asia in his stead.[164]

With only the slight variation of substituting (M)andane for Astyages, one can see how and why both Genesius and Constantine employed the vine motif to illustrate to all God's charisma toward Basil. Even earlier, however, it was used by Basil as a favorite ornamental motif in Byzantine art. Strzygowski has shown that Basil adorned the capitals of the Bible House Cistern at Constantinople with vine motifs.[165]

Constantine states that Basil's mother did not give her consent to her son's departure until she had a second apparition. According to this dream, Pankalo saw a fire-breathing old man (οὗ πῦρ ἐξήει ἀπὸ τοῦ στόματος) who appeared and told her that God would place the scepter of the Roman Empire in the hands of her son, and that Basil should be encouraged to go to Constantinople. Pankalo was full of joy and asked him who he was, whereupon he answered that he was Elias the prophet.[166] Genesius repeats this story in a slightly briefer form.[167] The appearance of saints in dreams are frequent in hagiographical literature, and [164]Herodotus storians had subtle motives for selecting

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[164]Herodotus Persian Wars I. 108.

[165]J. Strzygowski, Byzantinische Denkmäler (Vienna, 1892), II, 100, 228; O. M. Dalton, Byzantine Art and Archaeology (Oxford, 1911), p. 704. The motif was also popular in Turkish and Hungarian legends; see Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 89.

[166]Vita Basilii, 222_{14-19}. [167]Genesius, 108_{16-19}.

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Elias.[168] In the first place, the prophet Elias was associated with Basil early in his reign. Constantine, for example, not only records the numerous churches which his grandfather had rebuilt in this saint's honor, but in connection with one he explicitly points out that Basil had built it in honor of Elias, who was the heavenly messenger to his mother and who predicted his accession to the throne.[169]

In the De Ceremoniis it is stated that Basil was responsible for reinstating the feast of Elias.[170] The later writer Zonaras concurs that Basil held the prophet Elias in the highest esteem, for he believed that his fiery chariot would bring him to heaven.[171] From the above examples, one can discern that not only was this saint associated with Basil, but this motif was also used as a vehicle for court propaganda. This becomes even more evident from several illuminations which have survived. In the Gregory of Nazianzas manuscript miniature (880-886), for instance, Basil is portrayed standing between the prophet Elias and

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[168]For the appearance of saints in dreams, see G. da Costa-Louillet, "Saints de Sicile et d'Italie Méridionale," Byzantion, 29-30 (1959-1960), 95-167; da Costa-Louillet, ibid., 24 (1954), 179-263, 453-512; da Costa-Louillet, ibid., 25-27 (1955-1957), 783-852.

[169]Churches rebuilt which are mentioned in the Vita Basilii, 308_{22}, 319_{14}, 325_{2-4}, 329_{19-33}, 337_{14}. The specific reference to Elias as foretelling his accession to the throne is found in ibid., 325_{13-15}.

[170]De Ceremoniis, 114-18; De Ceremoniis, ed. A. Vogt (Paris, 1935-1940), pp. 106-09. See, also, Commentaire, I, 130-36. Hereafter, when Vogt's De Ceremoniis is used, it will be cited as Vogt, D.C.

[171]Zonaras, 432_{12-25}.

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the Archangel Gabriel.[172] What is especially instructive is the extent to which the court propagandists went in employing art as a vehicle to show symbolically that Basil heralded a new age. In another miniature, the Prayer of Isaiah, this is subtly expressed in the following iconographic manner.[173] Isaiah is seen standing between two figures, which have certainly survived from classical iconography: a female figure with a shawl over her head personifying Might (Νύξ) and a child with a torch in his hand personifying Dawn (Ὄρος Ὄρος). Above, a ray of light streams down from the hand of God.[174] It is now believed that the Vita Basilii was a literary whitewash intended to exonerate Basil of his crimes and to show his divinely ordained accession to the throne, and I believe the selection of these metaphors had a deeper propagandist significance. To me the personification of night might well be interpreted as the departure of the Amorians, while the torch-bearing child could be Basil heralding a new age in a symbolic manner.[175]

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[172] See representation 11.

[173] K. Weitzmann's thesis is that this work belongs to the tenth century. This, however, is rejected by an earlier study by C. R. Morey, "Notes on East Christian Miniatures," Art Bulletin, 9 (1929), 3-30.

[174] See representation 12.

[175] Compare with what the prophet said to Pankalo: "He will become emperor and there will be a great number of offspring who will make the empire rich." Genesius, 108_{4-13}.

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CHAPTER III

BASIL'S RISE TO POWER

As Basil bade farewell to his mother and brothers, little could he have known or even imagined that this step would some day be instrumental in bringing him the most eminent position in the empire--the office of Autocrat of the Romans. The departure scene of Basil which is found in the biography of his grandson, however, is treated dramatically in accord with the encomion's theme. The Vita Basilii strives to demonstrate to all that even in this decision Basil was guided by Providence. Actually it is quite apparent that Basil's prime motive was simply economic. Unable to support himself and his family, he, as others before him, was attracted by the opportunities which a young man could find in the capital.

Lacking any formal education (a fact which his grandson and his literary colleagues strain to conceal beneath a cloak of rhetorical expressions and euphonisms), Basil set out with a rod and knapsack on his shoulder.[1] As in the case of a former emperor, Justin I (518-527), these

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[1] Vita Basilii, 220_{1-14}. Constantine states rhetorically that his grandfather was taught what was practical to do and say, to observe God and be pious, to honor and be obedient to his parents, and to be subordinate to the powerful and compassionate to the poor. Compare, also, Genesius, 107_{18-22}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 187_{25}-188_{3}.

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deficiencies in no way impaired Basil's career, for he had many counterbalancing assets which enabled him to succeed.[2] In the first place, he was young and handsome.[3] Second, the burdens of supporting his widowed mother and younger brothers had taught him many practical lessons, while the arduous labor involved in these burdens had further toned his body, giving him a fine physique.[4] Third, the difficulties of

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[2]The humble origins of a person were no deterrent to the imperial office. Marcian, as mentioned previously, also came from a simple background. Procopius writes about Justin I that not only was he of low origin but unlettered:

> For the Emperor Anastasius (491-518) appointed him Commander of the Palace Guards. And when the Emperor [Anastasius] departed this life, he [Justin] himself, because of the power of his office, succeeded to the throne, being already an old man tottering to his grave, who had never learned to tell one letter from another, and was, as the familiar phrase has it, "without the alphabet," a thing which had never happened before among the Romans. And while it was customary for the Emperor to affix letters in his own hand to all documents containing the orders that issued from him, he was unable either to issue orders himself or intelligently to share in the knowledge of what was being done. But the man who drew the lot to sit as his Counsellor, Proclus by name, who held the office of Quaestor, as it is called, himself used to attend to all matters with dependent judgment. But in order that they might have evidence of the Emperor's hand, those who had this matter in charge devised the following plan. Taking a small strip of prepared wood, they cut into it a sort of pattern of the four letters which mean in the Latin tongue "I have read," and dipping the pen into ink of the colour which Emperors are wont to use in writing, they would put it into the hand of this Emperor. And placing on the document the strip of wood which I have mentioned and grasping the Emperor's hand, they moved it and the pen along the pattern of the four letters, causing it to follow all the winding lines cut in the wood, and then went their way, carrying that kind of writing of the Emperor.

[3]Vita Basilii, 225_8; Georgius Continuatus, 817_1-821_{1-3}.

[4]Constantine, for instance, tells how Basil won the favor of the aristocrats through his courage, strength, and ability. The following are some examples: Vita Basilii, 229_2-230_{15} (describes the wrestling scene); Genesius also repeats this, 109_{21}-111_4; Vita Basilii, 230_{16}-231_{21} (describes his horse-breaking feat).

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life had endowed him with a perspicacity beyond his years.[5] Finally, his Armenian origin was probably advantageous, for many at court and in influential positions might be inclined toward him because of a common ancestral heritage.[6]

His actual route to the capital is not known. One, however, can conjecture that he took the Via Egnatia, for he entered the city through the Golden Gate.[7] Tired and exhausted from this arduous journey, Basil sought lodgings with the approach of night.[8] Since churches and other religious institutions often provided lodgings for weary

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[5]This can be conjectured from later developments.

[6]On the Armenians in the empire at this time, see Charanis, The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire, pp. 23-28. The importance of Armenians in Michael III's court is readily seen. His mother, Theodora, was first of all of Armenian origin. Besides her brothers Bardas and Petronas, who are well known, many other members of her family also held high positions. Her father, Marius, was a drungarius and a turumarch. Her brother-in-law, Constantine Babutzikos, was a magister and Drungarius of the Watch. Another brother-in-law was Arsavir, a patrician and magister. From their names one can see that these men were all Armenians. Another Armenian was Constantine Maniakes, the Drungarius of the Watch and later Logothete under Michael III. He befriended Basil early in his career because he was an Armenian like Basil. Another was Theophilitzes, the rich courtier and functionary who gave Basil employment when he arrived in Constantinople.

[7]It can be conjectured that he took the Via Egnatia, for it passed through the imperial suburbs of Hebdomon and ended at the Golden Gate. We know at least that he entered through these portals for it is mentioned by the following sources: Vita Basilii, 223_9; Genesius, 108_1; Georgius Continuatus, 819_{16}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 188_{16}; Pseudo-Symeon, 655_{24}.

[8]All agree on this point but Symeon says that it was on a Sunday; Georgius Continuatus, 819_{17} (κυριακὴ γὰρ ἦν, καὶ ὁ ἥλιος πρὸς δυσμὰς)

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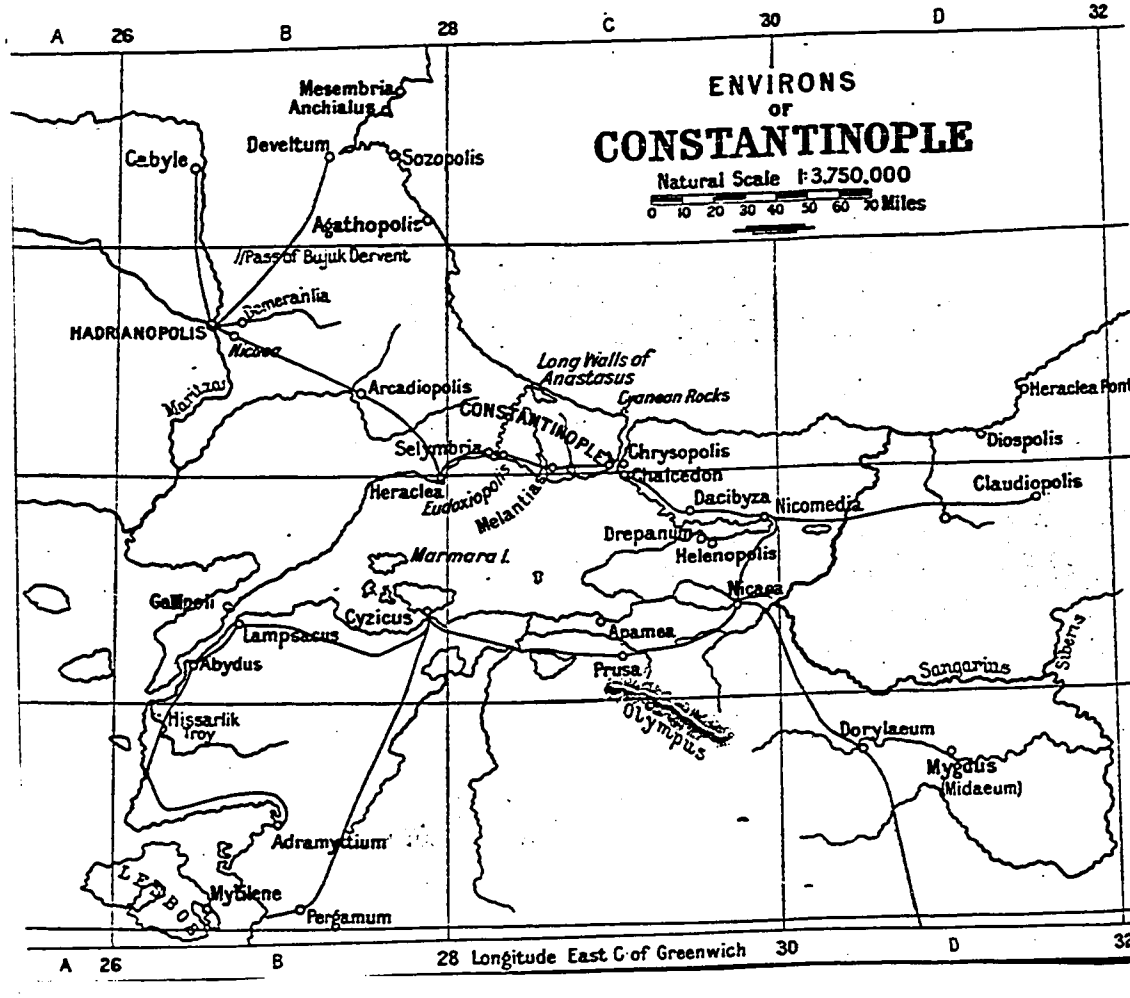

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travelers, he looked for such a place to provide accommodations for him. Nearby he found the monastery of Saint Diomedes.[9] Instead of entering, however, Constantine records that his grandfather lay down and fell asleep on the steps of the vestibule (πυλῶνος) of the monastery.[10] The hand of God again showed itself on Basil's behalf in the following manner. During that night the martyr Diomedes appeared in a dream to the abbot (καθηγουμένῳ) of the monastery (μονῆς) and ordered him to go outside and call the name Basil (ἐξ ὀνόματος καλέσαι Βασίλειον). Whoever would respond to this name he would bring into the sanctuary and provide with food, shelter, clothes, and other necessities because he was the future emperor who would rebuilt the monastery.[11] At first the abbot paid no attention to this dream and it repeated itself. When he continued to ignore

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[9] On the location of St. Diomedes, Antony of Novogorod said that it was located near the Golden Gate. See B. de Khitrowo, Itinéraires russes en Orient (Geneva, 1889), p. 102. For literature on the subject, see R. Janin, La Geographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin, Vol. III: Les Eglises et les Monastères (Paris, 1953), pp. 100-02; A. D. Mordtmann, Esquisse topographique de Constantinople (Lille, 1892), p. 77, No. 134. See, also, maps 1 and 2 in Janin's book. From Symeon's account it was a general church (καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία). According to A. Van Millingen, Constantinople: The Walls of the City and Adjoining Historical Sites (London, 1899), p. 265, some remains have been found:

> "The excavations made in laying out the public garden beside the city walls west of the Gas Works at Yedi Koule brought to light substructures of an ancient edifice in the construction of bricks stamped with the monogram of Basil I and with a portion of the name Diomedes

[10] Vita Basilii, 223_{12-14}. It was actually a church at this time, but since Constantine calls it a monastery I have retained this word.

[11] Ibid., 223_{17-22}.

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the dream, the martyr appeared to him a third time and ordered him to fulfill his request, even threatening the abbot with physical force if he did not obey.[12] After this third occurrence, he got up and stepped into the vestibule and called the name Basil.[13] Basil immediately answered: "Here I am, O Lord, what do you order your servant?"[14] Then the abbot led him into the monastery and provided him with all his needs. Later he related this prophecy to Basil and asked him to remember it when it came true. Basil, in turn, asked the abbot to recommend him to some well-known individual. Shortly thereafter the abbot fulfilled this request, for he introduced Basil to a frequent visitor, Theophilitzes, a relative of Michael III and Caesar Bardas.[15] Impressed by the young man's appearance, Theophilitzes took Basil immediately into his service. Later he promoted Basil to the position of Protostrator because he distinguished himself through his physical strength and bravery.[16] Scylitzes'

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[12] Ibid., 223_{22}-224_{16}. In the third dream, Constantine says, he ordered him a third time, not softly and cheerfully but violently (οὐκέτι πράως καὶ ἱλαρῶς παρακελευόμενον ἀλλὰ σφοδρῶς ....)

[13] Ibid., 224_{6-8}.

[14] Ibid., 224_{8-10} ("Ἰδοὺ ἐγώ, κύριε. Τί προστάσσεις τῷ δούλῳ σου;")

[15] Ibid., 224_{20-24}.

[16] Ibid., 225_{1-14} (πρωτοστράτορα αὐτοῦ πεποίηκεν ὁ Θεόφιλος). Constantine curiously refers to Theophilitzes by three different spellings: first Theophilitzes (Θεοφιλίτζων), ibid., 224_{24}; then Theophidion (Θεοφιλίδιον), ibid., 225_{2}; and finally Theophilos (Θεόφιλος), ibid., 225_{10}. The duties of Protostrator were with regard to the household stables. See Bury, I.A.S., pp. 117-18.

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account repeats almost word for word Constantine's story.[17] The court historian Genesius recounts this story in an abbreviated form, but there are two deviations--the monastery is dedicated to Elias, and the martyr appears only twice.[18] There are further deviations in the Logothete's chronicle, although it is similar to both Constantine's and Genesius' accounts.[19] According to this chronicle, Basil arrived at the church of St. Diomedes on a Sunday as the sun was setting.[20] Instead of a dream which appears to the abbot, in this account a godly voice (ἡ θεία φωνή) calls the caretaker, Nicolaus, with the following words: "Arise and invite the Emperor into the sanctuary."[21] When Nicolaus got up and looked out, he saw only a poor man asleep. Therefore he went back to bed, but the same event was repeated. On a third occasion, a sword was poked into his rib, and he was reminded to pay attention.[22] Again the voice spoke, "Go and bring in him who is sleeping in the vestibule, for he is the Emperor."[23] This time Nicolaus acted immediately and stepped

[17] Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 188_{14}-190_{10}.

[18] Genesius' account is interrupted by a dream which Basil's mother had. See 108_{1-4} (his arrival at St. Diomedes); 108_{20}-109_{10} (the appearance of the martyr).

[19] On the whole, Symeon's work is similar to both Constantine's and Genesius'.

[20] Georgius Continuatus, 819_{15-18}. Unlike the previous works, this source calls St. Diomedes a church (ἐκκλησία), not a monastery (μονῆς).

[21] Ibid., 819_{18-21}.

[22] Ibid., 820_{1-4}. The weapon is called a ῥομφαίας, which was a scimitar common in Thrace.

[23] Ibid., 820_{4-6}.

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into the vestibule where he found Basil asleep beside his rod and knapsack. The next day he took Basil and gave him a bath and a change of clothes and then entered into a brotherhood with him.[24] Later Nicolaus introduced Basil to his brother, a physician, who was in the service of Theophilitzes. Admiring Basil's physical strength, the physician recommended him to his employer, who straightaway hired him as a groom. Later Basil gained the favor of Theophilitzes, who especially admired his large head.[25] In the chronicle of Pseudo-Symeon there are indications which show that this author also employed the same sources as Genesius and Symeon. Like the former, for instance, he mentions the dream which Nicolaus had and says also that St. Diomedes was dedicated to Elias.[26] On the other hand, he calls the church general and the caretaker προσμονορίου as Symeon does.[27] The accounts of later Byzantine chronicles go back either directly or indirectly to the description in the Vita Basilii; however, there are some deviations which suggest that these writers were also influenced by other sources. Zonaras, for instance, mentions a sexton, not a kathegumenos as Symeon does, and asserts that the church of

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[24] Ibid., 820_{6-10}. Basil had with him a rod and knapsack (μετὰ τῆς πήρας καὶ ῥαβδου).

[25] Ibid., 820_{10-23}. Symeon says he, therefore, called him Kephalas.

[26] Pseudo-Symeon, 656_{2}.

[27] Ibid., 656_{3}. The whole account is found on 655_{21}-657_{1}.

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St. Diomedes was not yet a monastery. He concurs with Symeon, however, that the sexton's brother introduced Basil to Theophilitzes.[28] According to Michael Glycas' account, the sexton of St. Diomedes was awakened by an angel, not by the martyr.[29] In Constantine Manasses' version there is only a reference to a simple dream which the sexton had, but the martyr is not mentioned.[30] The story of Ephraim is in total accord with Zonaras'.[31] The popular works of the Historia Imperatorum and the chronicle of Dorotheos, however, show their marked dependence upon the Vita Basilii of Constantine VII, except for a few exaggerations.[32]

How widespread this legend was can be seen from many examples. In art, it was pictorially represented in the Madrid Scylitzes manuscript.[33] The ambassador of Otto I to Constantinople, Liudprand of Cremona, also knew it but with a different variation. He says,

> He came down to Constantinople, and was for a time servant to an abbot. The then emperor Michael went one morning to pray in the monastery where he was serving, and seeing that he was exceptionally comely called the abbot, and asked him to give him the lad.[34]

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[28] Zonaras, 409_{10}-411_{2}. [29] Michael Glycas, 546_{16}-547_{4}.

[30] Constantine Manasses, $233_{5220-5240}$. He refers to the caretaker as sexton (Νεωκόρου), l. 5229.

[31] Ephraim, 111_{34}-112_{62}.

[32] Chronicle of Dorotheos, and the Historia Imperatorum in D.O.P., 15 (1961), 123_{24}-133_{45}. As in Symeon's work, the caretaker is called προσμονάριος, but it is a young man who appears in a white robe.

[33] See representations 3 and 5.

[34] Liudprand of Cremona, chap. viii, p. 36. This is again repeated in chap. xxxii, p. 124.

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Perhaps it was as part of the court propaganda that this legend was associated with Basil, for his son, Leo the Wise, mentions in his Funeral Oration that the martyr foretold his father's succession to the throne.[35] Elsewhere he adds that after the prophecy was fulfilled Basil restored the church and gave it to the monks.[36] Other sources, too, confirm that Basil later, when emperor, endowed the church of St. Diomedes with his munificence. The Vita Euthymii, for example, even goes so far as to call St. Diomedes Basil's monastery.[37] According to Constantine, his grandfather provided St. Diomedes with valuable gifts, books, treasures, magnificent garments, great properties, revenues, and buildings.[38] The historian Genesius concurs with this report.[39] According to later derivative sources, Basil also handsomely rewarded Nicolaus and his brothers.[40] Archaeological discoveries have further substantiated this fact;

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[35] Funeral Oration, 50_{25-29}. In this variation, however, the martyr appears to Basil (Ὅ γε μάρτυς καθ' αὐτὸ τῆς νυκτὸς ἐπιστὰς τήν τε βασιλείαν προὐλεγεν καὶ τὴν τοῦ ναοῦ ἐπιμέλειαν παρηγγυά)

[36] Ibid., 50_{29}-52_{3}.

[37] Vita Euthymii, Byzantion, 25-27, 52_{32-34}.

[38] Vita Basilii, 316_{21}-317_{7} (ἀναθημάτων πολυτελῶν... βιβλίων ... λαμπρῶν ἐσθημάτων... κτημάτων μεγάλων τε καὶ προσόδων...)

[39] Genesius, 109_{11-14}.

[40] Georgius Continuatus, 842_{16-24}. According to him, Nicolaus was rewarded with the dignity of Synkellus and Oikonomos. His brother John became Drungarius of the Watch, Paul a Sakellarius, and Constantine a Logothete. See on this, also, Leo Grammaticus, 256_{13-18}; Theodosius of Melitene, 179_{6-12}; Pseudo-Symeon, 691_{10-14}.

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for under the ruins of the monastery, bricks with Basil's monogram and a portion of the name Diomedes have been found.[41]

From this evidence, one can conclude at least two things: one, that there was a church of Diomedes is a historical fact; two, that the caretaker, Nicolaus, is a historical figure, but what is reported about him gives rise to difficulties. First, both Genesius and Constantine are silent about his name and wrongly call him a kathegumenos. It is only in the inimical Symeon that the name of the caretaker appears.[42] In part this is understandable if one remembers that both Constantine and Genesius wrote their histories to exonerate Basil of his crimes and to depict God's charisma toward the future emperor. The roles of other individuals who may have helped Basil in these formative years, therefore, would obviously have to be played down. For this same reason Basil's brothers are seldom mentioned in connection with his career. There may be a more subtle reason for this inadvertence. Perhaps Nicolaus was a relative or a contact who knew beforehand of Basil's arrival and was ready to aid him. This is only a conjecture, but did not Nicolaus assist Basil? One can also argue that this action on the part of the caretaker was merely

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[41] Van Millingen, op. cit., p. 265.

[42] The language of our later derivative sources seems to indicate that they employed Symeon's chronicle with some other materials taken from Constantine.

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philanthropic.[43] It is well known that the church did frequently participate in such activities. Serious doubts are raised by the rewards which Basil bestowed on Nicolaus and his family. According to Symeon, Nicolaus received the dignity of Synkellus and Oikonomos. In the ninth century the position and function of this office acquired a great significance, and a synkellus was not infrequently elevated to the patriarchal throne.[44] Both Basil's son, Stephanus, and Euthymius held this office prior to their election to the patriarchate. A brother of Nicolaus, John, was given the important post of Drungarius of the Watch.[45] A second brother, Paul, was appointed Sakellarius, an imperial official who was in charge of the emperor's treasury. From the seventh century on, the importance of this official grew, and the Taktikon Uspenski places him at the head of all of

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[43] On humanitarianism in this period, see the Rev. D. Constantelos, "Philanthropy in the Byzantine Empire" (Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of History, Rutgers University, 1965).

[44] According to Bury, I.A.S., pp. 116-17, the function of the synkellus was to conduct communications between the patriarch and the emperor. In the ninth century, however, emperors aimed at using the office for succession to the patriarchal office. The office apparently was one of the imperial ἀξίαι. In the Vita Euthymii, Byzantion, 25-27, 28_{1-11}, this is clearly seen when Basil's son Stephanus, who held this post, became Patriarch and urged Euthymius to succeed him. Here a clear reference is made to the office as a βασιλικὸν ἀξίωμα.

[45] The position of the Drungarius was to be responsible for the safety of the camp. He, furthermore, received and conveyed the order of the emperor. See Bury, I.A.S., p. 60. His position is also reflected in the ceremonies in the Hippodrome. See De Ceremoniis, 589

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the officials of the empire, both civil and military.[46] A third brother, Constantine, was made the ὁ λογοθέτης τοῦ γενικοῦ, an official who was responsible for surveying and collecting the taxes of the empire.[47] Since it is known that Basil rewarded many of his other relatives and friends with important posts, it is not unreasonable to conjecture that Nicolaus and his brothers were more than chance acquaintances who just happened to assist Basil. It is likely, therefore, as I have already noted, that Nicolaus and his brothers knew of Basil's arrival and were ready to help him in whatever way they could. This is why they were rewarded with such high offices and dignities later. In an encomion the focus must always be on the principal figure; historical truth is simply of secondary importance. This may be the reason why Constantine and Genesius ignored Nicolaus' name. If they had mentioned it, it would only have weakened their theme--God's charisma toward Basil. This fact also explains the appearance of the saints, dreams, and other signs employed by these authors. As I have already noted, the dream or prophetic voice is frequently found in Christian literature, for it was a living part of the

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[46] Taktikon Uspenski, p. 111. According to the list of Philotheos, he comes after the Strategoi of the Western themes and before the General Logothete. See Bury, I.A.S., p. 139.

[47] On this office, see ibid., pp. 86-87.

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Byzantine tradition.[48] The same can be said for the threefold calling.[49] The fact that Basil stayed at St. Diomedes made it necessary for these authors to employ symbols which were well known to and believable by their contemporaries. When one considers the celebrated reputation of this general church, this becomes even more evident.[50] The fact that

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[48]The use of dreams or prophetic voices is not only ancient but frequently found in Christian literature. For example, in the Bible it is found in the story of Solomon (1 Kings 3:5): "In Gibeon, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, Ask what I shall give thee." In hagiographical literature it is also found. See Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 94ff.

[49]The threefold calling has already been noted by me, but in this case there is a strong resemblance to the story of Samuel (1 Sam. 3:3-9). Compare Samuel below with Constantine's account:

> "And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the Ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; that the Lord called Samuel and he answered, Here am I. And he ran in to Eli and said, Here am I; for thou calleth me. And he said, I called not; be down again. And he went and lay down. And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here I am; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down, and it shall be, if he call thee, that those shall say, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place."

Moravcsik has also shown that the Patriarch Ignatius also had a similar dream; see D.O.P., 15, 95. In hagiographical literature this sign frequently appears as well. See the articles by da Costa-Louillet: Byzantion, 24, 179-263; 453-512; ibid., 25-27, 745-852; ibid., 29-30, 89-173.

[50]St. Diomedes was a celebrated church. According to John Malalas, 481, a woman foretold to those who would listen to her that a great earthquake would occur in three days. As a result a large crowd gathered in 540 at the church to offer its prayers to avert it. Theophanes, 237_{6-12}, also records

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Basil was associated with this sanctuary in his early life, therefore, was employed by the court historians again to show God's charisma toward the future emperor.

After relating how Basil entered the service of Theophilitzes, Constantine employs still another dream and prophecy to show God's providence. He relates that soon after Basil departed, his mother, having become worried over her son's journey, had the following reassuring dream. She dreamt that she saw in her courtyard a giant cypress plant (μέγα φυτὸν κυπαρίσσου) whose trunk, branches, and leaves were all of gold, and on its crown sat Basil. The next day she told this dream to a pious woman, who told her that Basil would become emperor of Byzantium. Since this dream was in accord with an earlier one, Pankalo was filled with great hope.[51] This same story can be found almost word for word in Scylitzes[52] and was pictorially represented in the Madrid Scylitzes manuscript.[53] The meaning which can be derived from this motherly dream should be obvious by now. According to Treitinger, the cypress plant was from ancient times a symbol which denoted the rule over the Oikoumene.[54] It is found in the Book of Daniel, where it is related that

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that in 562 A.D. the Patriarch Euthychius led a solemn procession to the church in order to end a serious drought. One can see from these examples that the church of St. Diomedes was celebrated among the Byzantines.

[51] Vita Basilii, 225_{15}-226_{6}.

[52] Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 190_{11-22}.

[53] See representation 4.

[54] On this subject, see Treitinger, op. cit., pp. 135ff.

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Nebuchadnezzar had such a dream. In ninth-century Byzantium it found artistic expression in the court of Theophilius (829-842). According to Symeon, the audience chamber of the palace of Magnaura had a golden cypress tree which overshadowed the throne. Birds sat on its branches and on the throne itself. Golden griffins were at the side and lions at the foot of the throne. In addition there was a gold organ. When an ambassador was introduced into the emperor's presence the animals rose, the lions roared, and the birds sang, but all ceased at the sound of the organ.[55] The dream of Basil's mother, therefore, meant indubitably that Basil would become emperor of the Romes; i.e., the ruler of the whole Oikoumene.

Employed first as a groom in the service of the courtier Theophilitzes, a relative of the Emperor Michael and of Caesar Bardas, Basil rapidly won the favor of his new master through his physical strength and bravery and was rapidly promoted to the position of Protostrator.[56] Sometime thereafter when Theophilitzes was sent on a special imperial mission to the Peloponnesus Basil accompanied him.[57] The two men left Constantinople in late spring or early summer in the year 856 A.D. for Patras, an important city of the

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[55] Georgius Continuatus, 793_{7-14}; Leo Grammaticus, 215_{16-17}; Pseudo-Symeon, 627_{10-14}; Vita Basilii, 257_{1-10}; Theophanes Continuatus, 173_{5-11}; Liudprand of Cremona, VI, 207-08 (chap. v).

[56] Vita Basilii, 225_{1-14}. On the role of Protostrator in the Byzantine Empire, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 117-18.

[57] Vita Basilii, 226_{7-10}.

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Peloponnesian theme.[58] In all probability, this mission was somehow connected with Michael's newly acquired position as sole emperor.[59] Since the Peloponnesian Slavs were only recently reduced to the condition of provincial subjects by Theoctistus Bryennius during the previous regency, perhaps this embassy was to survey the situation in this region or to confirm Michael's authority there.[60]

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[58]Since travelling was restricted to the spring and summer months, I have conjectured that it occurred during this period, for Michael became sole emperor in 856 (spring). On the dating of the creation of the Peloponnesian theme there is some controversy. The strategos is first mentioned by the Scriptor Incertus, 336, during the reign of Michael I (811-813) (Καὶ Λέοντα τὸν ἐπιλεξόμενον τοῦ Ἐκλεκτοῦ, καὶ ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν στρατηγὸν εἰς Πελοπόννησον ....). Earlier scholars, therefore, attributed its creation soon after the attack on Patras in 805. Compare Bury, E.R.E., p. 224; F. Dvornik, Les Légendes de Constantin et de Methode vues de Byzance (Prague, 1933), p. 8. Hopf, op. cit., p. 99, supported the year 807; and H. Gelzer, Die Genesis der Themenverfassung (Leipzig, 1899), pp. 91, 131, attributed it to Michael III. According to the De administrando imperio, chap. 49, pp. 228-33, the strategos of the Peloponnesus already existed when the Slavs revolted in 805. Aretas of Caesarea and the chronicle of Monemvasia, ed. A. Bees, p. 66, also concur that the theme was in existence before 805 (Εἰς δὲ τῶν τοιούτων στρατηγῶν ὁρμώμενος μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς μικρᾶς Ἀρμενίας, φρατρίας δὲ τῶν ἐπονομαζομένων Ἐκλεκτῶν, συμβαλὼν τῷ Θλαβιανῶν ἔθνει πολεμικῶς εἶλέ τε καὶ ἠφάνισεν εἰς τέλος καὶ τοῖς ἀρχῆθεν οἰκήτορσιν ἀποκαταστῆναι τὰ οἰκεῖα παρέσχεν). On the creation, see, also, P. Charanis, "Hellas in the Greek Sources of the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Centuries," in Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of Albert M. Friend, Jr., ed. K. Weitzman (Princeton, 1955), pp. 161-76; Charanis, D.O.P., 5, 147ff; Ostrogorsky, op. cit., p. 172 (n. 2); Bon, op. cit., pp. 43-47. All of the texts and documents on this subject can be found in V. Laurent, "Sceux byzantin inédets," B.Z., 33 (1933), 338-40.

[59]Since Michael became sole emperor in 856 I would assume a diplomatic mission would shortly follow, especially into a region which may have needed settlement.

[60]It was only during the regency of Theodora that the rapine and brigandage of the Slavs was suppressed by Protospotharius Theoctistus Bryennius, the strategos of the Peloponnesus. See De administrando imperio, 232-33:

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The arrival of Basil at Patras offered him a new opportunity to further his unquenchable ambition. Here he met a rich provincial widow, Danelis, who possessed in the Peloponnesus not only vast estates but industrial wealth as well.[61] Entering into a liaison with this woman, who was at least twenty years his senior,[62] Basil charmed her and won her with the promise of making her mistress of the whole land when he became emperor.[63] Flattered and overwhelmed by this wily adventurer's handsome and youthful appearance, she bestowed on him many gifts including gold, thirty slaves, rich clothes, and other things merely on condition that he become the spiritual brother of her son John.[64] Quick to realize the advantage which wealth would give, Basil agreed.

"And in the reign of Michael, the son of Theophilus, the Protospatharius Theoctistus, surnamed Bryennius, was sent as a military governor of the province of Peloponnesus with a great power and force of Thracians and Macedonians and the rest of the western provinces, to war upon and subdue them. He subdued and mastered all the Slavs and other insubordinates of the province of Peloponnesus, and only the Ezeritai and the Milingoi were left, towards Lacedaemonia and Helos."

[61] On this subject, see S. Runciman, "The Widow Danelis," Études dediées a la mémoire d'André M. Andréadés (Athens, 1940), pp. 425-31. His dating, however, is wrong. The year 850 which he gives is too early for this visit.

[62] Since Danelis already had a grandson old enough to enter the church alone, one may assume that she was at least twenty years older than Basil. This fact was already noted by Brooks, B.Z., 20, 488.

[63] Vita Basilii, 228_{10-17}.

[64] Ibid., 228_{3-7}. (δέδωκε γὰρ αὐτῷ καὶ χρυσὸν ἱκανὸν καὶ ἀνδράποδα πρὸς ὑπηρεσίαν τριάκοντα καὶ ἐν ἱματισμῷ καὶ διαφόροις εἴδεσι πλοῦτον πολύν, μηδὲν ἕτερον ἐπιζητήσασα τὸ πρότερον παρ' αὐτοῦ ἢ τὸ ποιήσασθαι, πνευματικῆς ἀδελφότητος σύνδεσμον πρὸς Ἰωάννην τὸν ταύτης υἱόν.)

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The incident proved to be somewhat embarrassing for his grandson two generations later. In an attempt to explain this episode, the Vita Basilii associates this visit with yet another prophecy. According to Constantine's biography the following occurred upon the arrival of his grandfather in the Peloponnesus. While Basil was discharging some of his duties, Theophilitzes and his entourage decided to pay a visit to the church of the Apostle Andrew. His entrance was received in a rather ordinary fashion even though Theophilitzes was a courtier and a relative of the emperor.[65] Basil's arrival later was received quite differently. When he entered the church, the monk in charge immediately got up as one would before a distinguished person and greeted him as one would an emperor.[66] The people who were present noticed this and the episode was thereafter related to the widow Danelis.[67] Knowing that the monk had the gift of prophecy, she asked him why it was that he had not shown as much attention to her, or her son and grandson, benefactors of this region, as he had to a simple stranger.[68] The monk replied that he did not see in this man a simple mortal, but the emperor of the Romans, anointed by Christ, whom God honors.[69] According to Constantine, Theophilitzes soon after completed his visit and returned to the capital, but Basil lingered because of an illness. When Danelis

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[65] Ibid., 226_{7-21}. [66] Ibid., 226_{21-24}.

[67] Ibid., 226_{24}-227_{1-3}. [68] Ibid., 227_{3-12}.

[69] Ibid., 227_{12-17}.

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learned of this, she helped nurse him back to health and later gave him many gifts, telling him that in the eyes of God he was a great man and would be distinguished from others.[70] Later chroniclers repeat this story in a longer or shorter form.[71] It is also pictorially represented in the Madrid Scylitzes manuscript.[72] Constantine relates that when Basil became emperor he remembered his benefactress. He made her son a Protospotharius and gave him free access to his presence;[73] she was loaded with honors and invited to visit the emperor at Constantinople.[74] When she arrived, she was entertained in the Palace of Magnaura as though she were a foreign potentate. She, in turn, brought for Basil a wealth of gifts. They included three hundred young male slaves, of whom a hundred were eunuchs, a hundred serving women, and a hundred rich and varied Sidonian garments (Σιδόνια ἔργα παμποίκιλα), a hundred linen and wool cloths (λινομαλοτάρια), a hundred woolen cloths of good linen (ἀμάλια λινᾶ), and a hundred other cloths of the finest woven thread, and a great many gold and silver

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[70] Ibid., 227_{17-25}-228_{1-7}.

[71] Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 190_{23}-193_{8}; Michael Glycas, 547_{4-8}; Ephraim, 113_{63-67}.

[72] See representation 5.

[73] Vita Basilii, 317_{7-10}. (Τὸν δὲ τῆς Δαηλίδος υἱὸν ἅμα τῷ γενέσθαι τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐγκρατὴς μεταπεμψάμενος τῷ τοῦ πρωτοσπαθαρίου ἐτίμησεν...)

[74] Ibid., 317_{10-25}.

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vessels. (καὶ σκευὴ πολυτελὴ ἐξ ἀργύρου καὶ χρυσοῦ ἱκανὰ καὶ διάφορα .)[75]

With his newly acquired wealth Basil returned to his homeland in Macedonian Thrace, where he purchased property for himself and enriched his family as well.[76] He, nevertheless, had the wisdom and foresight to realize that his future lay in the imperial capital, not in the humble provincial regions of his boyhood. Therefore as soon as he was able to arrange these matters he returned to "the City" and the service of Theophilitzes. Shortly after his arrival, which probably occurred later in that same year, a new opportunity arose for Basil to further his career.[77] Again it was through his physical strength and native abilities that Basil won the attention of the other courtiers and, eventually, the Emperor Michael III himself. According to some accounts it was his prowess as a wrestler which brought him fame, while according to others it was his skilled horsemanship. The court panegyrists have enshrouded both incidents in myths and legends through which only fragments of the truth can be seen.

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[75] Ibid., 318_{1-19}. It is curious that as the prophecy of the monk is mentioned in connection with Basil, the Emperor Philippicus was also told by a monk that he would become an emperor. See Theophanes, 381_{6-13}.

[76] Vita Basilii, 228_{17-22}.

[77] The mission left soon after Michael's inauguration in March of 856. This means that they departed probably late in the spring or early summer. Since Basil spent a considerable time travelling, winning the heart of Danelis, and visiting his family, he could hardly have returned before the fall of 856.

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Constantine, in the Vita Basilii, relates how Basil, prior to taming Michael's horse, won the attention of the courtiers by his wrestling ability. According to Constantine, Antigonus, the Patrician and Domestic of the Schools,[78] gave a banquet in the palace in honor of his father, Caesar Bardas, who brought with him many distinguished persons including some Bulgarian envoys who happened to be in the city.[79] Among the Byzantines were Theophilitzes, Basil's master, and Constantine, the Patrician and Logothete of the Course.[80] The Bulgarians had with them a noted wrestler who, they boasted, had never been defeated in the ring. After some serious drinking, Theophilitzes approached Caesar Bardas with the proposition that his man, Basil, be permitted to wrestle this Bulgarian because it would be a disgrace for Byzantium if this man returned to his homeland undefeated.[81] Bardas agreed, and the preparations for the match began. Constantine the Armenian, a Patrician, who held Basil in high esteem because of the fact that they were compatriots, sprinkled some sawdust (πρίσμα κατὰ τὸ ἔδαφος) on the floor so the Byzantine contender would not slip.[82] The match began, and Basil easily threw the Bulgarian, pinning his shoulders to a table. From that day, writes

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[78] Chronologically this can hardly be the case, for Caesar Bardas was the Domestic of the Schools at this time, and Antigonus was but a young boy. On the office of the Domestic of the Schools, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 49-53.

[79] Vita Basilii, 229_{1-8}. [80] Ibid., 229_{8-12}.

[81] Ibid., 229_{12-21}. [82] Ibid., 230_{1-6}.

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Constantine, the fame of Basil spread through the city.[83] The chronicle of Scylitzes repeats the wrestling story with only a few changes.[84] It is also pictorially represented in the Madrid Scylitzes manuscript.[85] In Genesius there are two variations of this story. In one, Theophilitzes maintained a wrestling company of youths who had a rivalry with those in the employment of the Emperor Michael and Caesar Bardas. One day Theophilitzes gave a banquet which was followed by a wrestling match. Neither Bardas nor Michael was present but Antigonus represented them. In the match the wrestlers of Theophilitzes were all bested, until Basil who had not yet participated was summoned to wrestle with the champion of Michael and Caesar Bardas. Constantine the Armenian sprinkled some chaff (ἀχυρῳ) on the floor so Basil would not slip. Employing a grip called the κατὰ πόδρεφον, Basil took the initiative and threw his opponent so hard that he could only be revived with water.[86] This feat so impressed Antigonus that he told his father, who reported the episode to Michael. In this manner Basil won the favor of the Emperor Michael, who honored him with many offices.[87] Elsewhere Genesius praises Basil's many other abilities, which he compares with those of past Greek heroes. Among these were his agility in the hunt (κυνηγεσίαν), in ball-playing (σφαιρισμόν), in

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[83] Ibid., 230_{6-15}. [84] Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 193_{9}-194_{15}.

[85] See representation 6. [86] Genesius, 109_{21}-110_{1-18}.

[87] Ibid., 111_{1-4}.

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wrestling (πάλην), in jumping (πηδήμασιν), in discus-throwing, in weight-lifting, and in running.[88]

The above version contains no reference to any victory over a Bulgarian champion, although Genesius does mention such an episode on a later occasion. Unlike Constantine's account, this incident takes place when Basil was already emperor. According to Genesius, in this match Basil threw his opponent so hard that blood came out of both his nose and ears, and the Bulgar was only revived by using water, wine, and rose water.[89] The anonymous author of the Historia Imperatorum obviously employed materials from both Constantine and Genesius, for his description is as follows. Theophilitzes invited some Bulgarian envoys and some Byzantine aristocrats to a wrestling match, but a Bulgarian champion bested all comers. The spectators, as a result, offered a huge reward to anyone who could beat the Bulgarian athlete. Basil, who was in the service of Theophilitzes, accepted this challenge and defeated this champion, and gained the esteem of the emperor.[90]

The story of Basil's wrestling feat, in all probability, had a historical origin; Genesius himself records that even in his day it was talked about. It is quite apparent that the written variations which have survived were altered from time to time through different oral and written traditions. This same tendency can be seen in another episode. According

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[88] Ibid., 126_{10-25}-127_{1-4}. [89] Ibid., 127_{15-25}-128_{1-5}.

[90] Historia Imperatorum, D.O.P., 15 (1961), 125-26_{67-108}.

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to many of the sources, Basil won the favor and honor of Michael not through his wrestling abilities, as Genesius alone emphasizes, but through his horsemanship.[91] The Vita Basilii records this in the following manner. Michael owned a beautiful and noble horse (γενναῖος καὶ ἀγαθός) which caused his servants a great deal of trouble, for he refused the reins and was unmanageable (ἵππος ἀφηνιαστὴς καὶ ἄτακτος σκληραύχην).[92] Once, during a hunt, the emperor dismounted in order to hunt down a hare (λαγών), whereupon the horse ran off and could not be caught.[93] Exasperated, Michael ordered the horse's hind legs to be chopped off (διακοπῆναι τοὺς ὀπισθιούς αὐτοῦ τῶν ποδῶν).[94] Caesar Bardas, on the other hand, urged Michael to be lenient. Basil, who was also present and still in the service of Theophilitzes, asked his master if he could be permitted to catch the horse by jumping on its back, seeing that it bore the imperial coat of arms (βασιλικοῖς φαλαρίοις κεκοσμῆσθαι).[95] Given permission by the emperor, Basil easily achieved this task and so impressed Michael that he was taken from the service of Theophilitzes and was made an imperial servant who looked

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[91]Only Genesius emphasizes that Basil gained the attention of Michael through his wrestling exhibition. On the other hand, the inimical Symeon and his grandson state that it was his horse-breaking feat that brought him Michael's favor.

[92]Vita Basilii, 230_{16-19}. [93]Ibid., 231_{1-3}.

[94]Ibid., 231_{3-8}. [95]Ibid., 231_{8-14}.

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after the horses (στρατόρας).[96] In time Michael became even fonder of Basil, and when he proved himself he made him master of the stables (πρωτοστράτορος).[97] Scylitzes repeats this story with a few differences.[98] A representation of this scene can be seen in the Madrid Scylitzes manuscript.[99] In Michael Glycas and the Historia Imperatorum, shorter and longer versions can be found.[100] Genesius, however, records only that after Basil became Protostrator he rode the emperor's favorite horses.[101] In the Logothete's chronicle, there is another variation of this episode in which the strategos of the Bucellarion theme (ὁ τῶν βουκελλαρίων στρατηγὸς) gave Michael a noble and high-spirited horse (θυμοειδῆ καὶ γενναῖον), but his grooms were unable to manage it.[102] Michael was perplexed until Theophilitzes suggested that his groom, Basil, might be

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[96] Ibid., 231_{14-17}. On the office of the strator, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 117-18.

[97] Vita Basilii, 234_{17-21}. On the office of the Protostrator, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 117-18. According to Bury, originally Basil's chief duty was to assist the emperor in mounting his horse, and he performed the duty of the grooms. See, also, R. Guilland, Recherches sur les institutions Byzantines (Amsterdam, 1967), I, 478-79; hereafter cited as Guilland, Institutions.

[98] Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 194_{16}-195_{21}.

[99] See representation 7.

[100] Michael Glycas, 552_{4-7}, gives only a short version of this story, but the Historia Imperatorum, D.O.P., 15 (1961), 124-25_{55-66}, gives a longer and more exaggerated account whose origin is clearly from Constantine.

[101] Genesius, 111_{10-14}.

[102] Georgius Continuatus, 816_{15-22}.

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able to tame it. Knowing how to charm horses, Basil grabbed the bridle of the horse (ὁ δὲ μιᾷ χειρὶ τὸν χαλινὸν κρατήσας) with one hand and with the other his ears (ὠτὸς). Immediately the horse became as gentle as a lamb (εἰς ἡμερότητα προβάτου μετέβαλεν).[103] The emperor, who admired Basil's strength, was overjoyed by this feat and took him into his service. First he was assigned a post under the Hetaeriarch Andrew, and he rapidly rose in rank.[104] A shorter version of this story can be found in Pseudo-Symeon, who erroneously places its occurrence in the year 853; i.e., during the regency of Theodora and Theoctistus.[105] The account of Zonaras is similar to Symeon's chronicle except that in it Basil also leaps on the horse's back.[106]

As in the case of Basil's wrestling prowess, his reputation as a horseman indubitably has a historical origin. The different variations can be explained by the fact that oral traditions altered the story as it was retold. I contend that most probably the nucleus of the aforementioned story was exaggerated by court propagandists to enhance Basil's prowess.[107] This may be inferred from several incontrovertible facts. First, heroic feats of horsemanship

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[103] Ibid., 817_{1-7}.

[104] Ibid., 817_{7-9} (ὁ βασιλεὺς παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν ἀνδρέᾳ ὅτι ἑταιρειάρχῃ τοῦ εἶναι εἰς τὴν ἑταιρείαν...)

[105] Pseudo-Symeon, 655_{7-18}. [106] Zonaras, 411_{4}-412_{5}.

[107] Contrary to this hypothesis is Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 102.

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were popular in Byzantine folklore. In the Digenes Akrites epic there is an episode in which the young hero tames an unruly horse in much the same fashion as Basil.[108] In hagiographical literature wild animals and untamed horses are often miraculously tamed by saints.[109] More significant is the remarkable parallel between Basil's feat and the story of the taming of Bucephalus by Alexander the Great in Plutarch:

> Philonicus the Thessalian brought the horse Bucephalus to Philip offering to sell him for 13 talents; but when they went into the field to try him, they found him so very vicious and unmanageable, that he reared up when they endeavoured to mount him, and would not so much as endure the voice of any of Philip's attendants. Upon which, as they were leading him away as wholly useless and untractable, Alexander, who stood by, said, "What an excellent horse do they lose for want of address and boldness to manage him!" Philip at first took no notice of what he said; but when he heard him repeat the same thing several times, and saw he was much vexed to see the horse sent away, "Do you reproach," said he to him, "those that are older than yourself, as if you knew more, and were better able to manage him than they?" "I could manage this horse," replied he, "better than others do." "And if you do not," said Philip, "what will you forfeit for your rashness?" "I will pay," answered Alexander, "the whole price of the horse." At

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[108] Digenes Akrites, edited with an introduction, translation, and commentary by J. Mavrogordato (Oxford, 1956), p. 138, ll. 1054-65:

> "So spoke the King; straightway the youth commanding
> One of his horses fresh from grass, unbroken,
> To be brought before them hobbled in irons;
> Bade his boys loose him, saying 'Let him run';
> And tucking fast his kilts into his girdle,
> Began to run behind to catch him up,
> And in a little distance seizing the mare
> He turned around backwards the great beast and wild,
> Kicking and plunging, all thinking to escape;
> And when the brave boy came before the King,
> He dashed it down spread out upon the ground.
> All were astounded at the marvellous sight."

[109] Moravcsik, D.O.P., 15, 101.

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> this the whole company fell alaughing; and as soon as the wager was settled amongst them, he immediately ran to the horse, and taking hold of the bridle, turned him directly towards the sun, having, it seems, observed that he was disturbed at and afraid of the motion of his own shadow; then letting him go forward a little, still keeping the reins in his hands, and stroking him gently when he found him to grow eager and fiery, he let fall his upper garment softly, and with one nimble leap securely mounted him, and when he was seated, by little and little drew in the bridle and curbed him without either striking or spurring him. Presently, when he found him free from all rebelliousness, and only impatient for the course, he let him go at full speed, inciting him now with a commanding voice and urging him also with his heel.[110]

A comparison of the above description with that of Constantine reveals several noticeable stereotypes. Both stories describe an unruly horse which is about to be punished. In both, this is prevented by the intercession of the hero who, through his skill, masters the animal to the amazement of all. The historian Genesius remarks that Basil's horsemanship was comparable to Alexander's taming of Bucephalus.[111] If one remembers that Constantine's genealogy claims Basil as a descendant of Alexander, the evidence that the aforementioned picture is merely part of the court propaganda and not historically authentic is evident.

In a later hunting episode the hand of the court propagandists is again clearly manifest. According to Constantine, when Basil was already the Protostrator of Michael, he rode in a hunt, as was customary, in front of the emperor. Suddenly there was a great noise, and a

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[110] Plutarch Life of Alexander VI, in LCL, pp. 236-39.

[111] Genesius, 111$_{12-14}$ (οὗτος αὐτοῦ ἐφαλλομένου ὡς εἴ τις ἄλλου βουκεφάλου ἀλέξανδρος ...)

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monstrous wolf (λύκος παμμεγεθέστατος) appeared from the forest (ἐκ τῆς ὕλης) causing fright and disorder among the company.[112] However, Basil, who had an imperial club (τὸ ῥόπαλον τὸ βασιλικὸν) on his belt, charged the animal and with one swing cut the beast's head in two.[113] Caesar Bardas, who was behind the emperor, witnessed this occurrence and said prophetically to his companions, "This man will bring ruin to all our family."[114] Scylitzes repeats this story almost word for word.[115] It is also pictorially represented in the Madrid Scylitzes manuscript.[116] In the popular Historia Imperatorum it is also briefly mentioned.[117] To characterize Basil's prowess in the hunt, Genesius tells among other things how Basil not only shattered the hind legs of a great stag, but he did the same to a wolf.[118]

These stories probably had some historical origin. Nevertheless I feel that the stories as they have survived

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[112] Vita Basilii, 231_{22}-232_{1-5}.

[113] Ibid., 232_{5-8} (ἔτυχε τοῦ θηρίου κατὰ τὸ μέσον τῆς κεφαλῆς καὶ ταύτην ἐδιχοτόμησεν)

[114] Ibid., 232_{8-11} (εἶπε πρὸς τινας τῶν συνεπομένων συνήθων αὐτοῦ καὶ γνωστῶν ὅτι οἶμαι πάσης τῆς γενεᾶς ἡμῶν τὴν καταλυσιν τὸν ἄνθρωπον τοῦτον μέλλειν γενήσεσθαι)

[115] Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 195_{21}-196_{8}.

[116] See representation 8.

[117] Historia Imperatorum, 124_{52-54} (καὶ γὰρ μίαν φοράν, ὡς ἐξέβησαν εἰς κυνήγιν, ἐπήδησε ποθεν λύκος, καὶ ὡς τὸν ἐδίωκναν....)

[118] Genesius, 127_{5-8} (τῷ βασιλεῖ ποτὲ περὶ θήραν... τὸ αὐτὸ δὴ τοῦτο καὶ ἐπὶ λύκῳ κατεπεπράχει.)

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most probably have as their basis the work of the court propagandists. There are several parallels. The hunting scene immediately recalls a scene in the mosaic of Alexander fighting a lion, which was discovered during excavations at Pella.[119] In the Digenes Akrites epic the young hero hunts not only stags but lions and bears as well.[120] These similarities are hardly accidental. As in the case of the taming of wild animals, the hunt was an important part of Byzantine folklore.[121]

The date of Basil's introduction to the Emperor Michael is difficult to establish. It seems obvious, in any case, that it was connected somehow with Basil's horse-taming feat, for this incident regardless of its decorative accents is mentioned by both his grandson and the inimical Symeon the Logothete. According to the latter, the incident followed shortly after Michael's marriage to Eudocia Dekapolites, but Symeon is vague about the chronology. As a matter of fact he probably had no precise information at all about this event so he concealed his ignorance with the expression "a little later" (μετὰ δὲ μικρὸν).[122] It is known that the marriage was consummated while Theoctistus was still

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[119]The illustration can be found in J. F. C. Fuller, The Generalship of Alexander the Great (New Brunswick, 1960), p. 155.

[120]Digenes Akrites, 72-78; on bears, see ll. 107ff.

[121]Ibid., p. 70, ll. 70ff., also speaks of this hero's hunting and horsemanship.

[122]Georgius Continuatus, 816_{15}.

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alive.[123] Since Theoctistus fell from power at the end of 855, Michael's marriage must be dated just prior to this time.[124] Shortly after this, says Symeon, Michael received an unmanageable horse from the strategos of the Bucellarion theme which was tamed by Basil's skill. Some caution, however, must be exercised in taking Symeon's expression (μετὰ δὲ μικρὸν) literally. It is highly unlikely that the two men met before Michael's sole accession to the throne on March 15, 856.[125] Constantine, for instance, places the meeting of his grandfather and Michael after the former's return from the Peloponnesus.[126] As I have already noted, this event could hardly have occurred prior to the autumn of that year. In addition, some time must also be allowed

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[123] Ibid., 816_{4-14}.

[124] Ostrogorsky, op. cit., p. 197; Dvornik, Photian Schism, p. 36; Bury, E.R.E., pp. 156-57. The date of the fall of Theoctistus has now been established with the assistance of the Synaxarion as November 20, 855. See Halkin, op. cit., pp. 11, 14.

[125] On the dating of Michael's reign all of the sources virtually agree that it began in 856. Georgius Continuatus, 810_{20-25}, says Michael reigned with his mother fourteen years and one month (842 + 14 = 856); Theophanes Continuatus, 210_{14}, also concurs (μητρὸς τέσσαρα καὶ δέκα); in the Anonymi chronographia syntomos, ed. Bauer, p. 68, it is stated that joint rule lasted fourteen years, one month, twenty-two days, or until March 15, 856; only the Vita Ignatii, ed. Migne, P.G. 105, states it was fifteen years and eight months. For literature, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 469-71; Adontz, Byzantion, 8, 491-93. The most recent study on Michael's birth is by C. Mango, "When Was Michael III Born?", D.O.P., 21 (1967), 253-58. According to Mango, an inscription on the famous bronze doors of the southwest vestibule of St. Sophia shows conclusively that Michael was born on January 9/10, 840 A.D.

[126] Vita Basilii, 230_{15}-231_{1-21}.

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between Basil's return to Theophilitzes' service and his meeting with the emperor. It must have taken place sometime prior to the exile of Theodora from the palace; on this all of our sources agree.[127] According to Symeon, Michael introduced Basil to his mother after Basil had won his attention by his horsemanship.[128] When Theodora saw him she was thoroughly frightened and said, "It is he, my son, who is fated to obliterate our family."[129] There are several other versions of this story. Constantine, for example, erroneously states that Theodora made this statement when Basil was already a Protostrator in the service of Michael.[130] In this account, Michael threw a large feast

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[127]According to the chronicles of Symeon the Logothete, 823, and Genesius, 87-90, it would appear that Theodora was expelled from the palace shortly after the fall of Theoctistus (November, 855). Their chronology, however, is extremely vague, for their expressions μετὰ μικρὸν and μετὰ βραχύ add little to the solution of this problem. For early literature on this problem, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 469-71. On a closer examination of Symeon, however, one can see that an interval followed. Apparently Michael tried to pacify his mother first and then distressing measures were taken against her. Three of her daughters--Tekla, Anastasia, and Anna--were sent to Karianos (εἰς τὰ Καριανοῦ). Then her favorite, Pulcheria, was sent to the monastery of Gastria. Theodora remained until August-September, 857, when she too was sent to Gastria. Basil, therefore, must have met her prior to the latter date. See, also, Grégoire, Byzantion, 8, 515-50.

[128]Georgius Continuatus, 821_{1-4}.

[129]Ibid., 821_{4-5} (οὗτός ἐστι τέκνου μου, ὃ μέλλων ἀφανίσαι τὸ γένος ἡμῶν)

[130]This is unlikely, for Basil's promotion to the post of Protostrator was connected with the fall of the earlier official who conspired with Theodora in 857 against Bardas. Since Theodora was promptly removed after this unsuccessful coup d'etat and Basil was promoted, Constantine's chronology must be dismissed as an invention.

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in which many aristocrats were present. When Basil presented himself, Theodora, who was also at hand, stared at him and remembering an omen, fainted. Later, when she was revived with some rose water, Michael questioned her. Whereupon she said that she saw in Basil the destruction of her family as her husband, Theophilus, had predicted many years ago.[131] Scylitzes' account is very similar,[132] and a representation of this scene can be seen in the Madrid Scylitzes manuscript.[133] An account of this scene is also found in a shorter version in Zonaras,[134] Constantine Manasses,[135] and the popular Historia Imperatorum.[136] Genesius, too, records that when Theodora first saw Basil she cried out, "Oh that, my child, have I not seen today, a man of such quality who will overtake our Empire as my blessed husband told me."[137]

Although the prophetic aspect of this incident must merely be considered as another example of court propaganda, the unanimity of the sources indicates that it has some historical basis. Therefore Basil's meeting with the emperor must be dated prior to August-September, 857; I would say

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[131] Vita Basilii, 233_{1-25}-234_{1-6}. Constantine continues that Michael tried to console his mother by telling that Basil was a simple and common man, having the extraordinary stre[illegible] ἀνδρῶν μόνος ἔχων, οἷον ὁ πάλαι Σαμψών...) ἐλπίς, ἀν[illegible]

[132] Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 196_{14}-197_{14}.

[133] See representation 9.

[134] Zonaras, 412_{8-18}.

[135] Constantine Manasses, 221_{82-89}.

[136] Historia Imperatorum, D.O.P., 15. 123_{2-9}.

[137] Genesius, 111_{5-9}.

[137] Historia Imperatorum, D.O.P., 15. 123_{2-9}.

[137] Genesius, 111_{5-9}.

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probably during the spring of that year, when interests in horses would once again resume after the winter months.

Serving first the Emperor Michael as strator or groom, Basil quickly won his new master's favor through his physical prowess.[138] In a few months fate further destined him to still a higher position. The Empress Mother, Theodora, who resided in the palace even after the murder of her chief minister, Theoctistus, remained resentful of her loss of power. Unforgiving even though she had been appeased, she became implicated in a political conspiracy against her brother, Caesar Bardas, and her son Michael. When these intrigues became known, Bardas and Michael decided to render useless her assistance to these conspirators by sending Theodora and her daughters to a convent.[139] With great leniency, considering what methods were often employed against conspirators even within the imperial family, the Patriarch Ignatius was asked to tonsure them. Loyal to Theodora, to whom he owed his office, Ignatius refused, but the deed was carried out and the empress and her daughters

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[138] Vita Basilii, 231_{18} (στράτορας); Georgius Continuatus, 817_{7-9}, says he was attached to the Hetaeriarch Andrew (ἀνδρέᾳ ὄντι ἑταιρειάρχῃ).

[139] Ibid., 823; see n. 127. Genesius, 90_{6-10}, says all were expelled to Gastria. Theophanes Continuatus, 174_{1-10}, says that they were tonsured by Petronas and sent to the Palace of Karianos, and later when Theodora died were confined in the monastery of Gastria; Vita Ignatii, 225 (τὴν μητέρα καὶ τὰς ἀδελφὰς καταλαβὼν ἐν τοῖς Καριανοῦ λεγομένοις ἀπενεχθῆναι κελεύει καὶ καρῆναι); Pseudo-Symeon, 658; Leo Grammaticus, 237; Vita Theodorae, 15.

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were sent to the monastery of Karianos.[140] Here she allowed herself to become involved in yet another coup, which was masterminded by the imperial Protostrator (τοῦ βασιλέως τὸν πρωτοστράτορα). His plan was to murder Bardas shen he returned from his suburban house on the Golden Horn.[141] His design was discovered and the Protostrator and his accomplices were all beheaded (τῆς κεφαλὰς ἀπετμήθησαν).[142]

With the fall of the imperial Protostrator, Basil was appointed in his place.[143] Although it is nowhere stated by any of the sources, it is possible that Basil himself learned of this conspiracy and exposed it. The office of his predecessor may have been his reward. One may then ask why was this not mentioned by his grandson? In reality, it was. Constantine de-emphasized it in an ambiguous fashion, for

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[140]According to Bury, E.R.E., p. 132 (n. 1), the Emperor Theophilus built the Palace of Karianos facing the Church of the Lord which was in the extreme north of the palace grounds, near to the southeast corner of the Augusteon and to the gate leading into the grounds of the Magnaura. This, however, could not be the Karianos where the empress and her daughters were exiled. The Karianos referred to here must be the monastery which lies in the region between Aya Kapu and Blachermae. See, on this, Van Millingen, op. cit., c. XIV, and Janin, op. cit., pp. 287-88.

[141]Georgius Continuatus, 823_{10-20} (τοῦ βασιλέως τὸν πρωτοστράτορα, ὅπως ὑποστέφουτα βάρδαν ἀπὸ τοῦ προαστείου αὐτοῦ τοῦ κοσμιδίου ἀναιρήσωιν αὐτον.)

[142]Ibid., 823_{20-24}.

[143]Ibid., 824_{1-2}. Basil was made Protostrator and Bardas Curopalates. On this office, see Guilland, Institutions, I, 478-79.

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the truth would make Basil's progress appear almost natural. Constantine's objective was to illustrate in a subtle way that this achievement was a godly piece of good fortune. Regardless of Constantine's subtlety, he slips and relates that Basil was exalted (ἐβίβασε) after proving himself with the office of Protostrator.[144] This expression leads one to believe that there was more to this promotion than the royal biographer would have us know.

As imperial Protostrator, Basil's career was only beginning, for henceforth Michael treated him as his favorite. Since the duties of his new office brought Basil in frequent attendance to the emperor, the clever adventurer was able to observe the weaknesses of Michael, and how intrigues at court were accomplished. Noting Michael's fondness for heroes, Basil endeavored to please his master in every possible way through hunting feats and other physical exhibitions.[145] As a result Michael found it difficult to be away from his new friend. When the emperor went on an expedition to Asia Minor in 858-859, Basil accompanied him and was given charge of rebuilding the citadel in the city of Ancyra.[146]

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[144]Constantine uses the expression ἐβίβασε : "exalted him with dignity of the office of Protostrator." It seems unlikely, to me at least, that such an expression would be employed except in the case of a reward.

[145]See earlier examples in this chapter of his weight-lifting, etc.

[146]H. Grégoire, "Inscriptions historique byzantines: Ancyre et les Arabes sous Michel l'Ivrogne," Byzantion, 4 (1927-1928), 437-68 (see especially pp. 447-48).

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Here, possibly even earlier, Basil received a further promotion, for an inscription now refers to him as Spartharo-candidatus.[147]

So far Basil seemingly owed all of his success to his physical skills and a bit of good fortune, but he was now thoroughly in the good graces of Michael, whom he sought to exploit in order to further his personal ambition. Sometime after Bardas' elevation to the dignity of Caesar (April 26, 862), another event furthered Basil's career.[148] The Grand Chamberlain, Damianus, a eunuch of Slavic origin who had assisted Bardas in the assassination of Theoctistus, had a falling out with the Caesar.[149] He had been disappointed in not succeeding Theoctistus, and he was further embittered when Bardas was made Caesar.[150] The feud between the two

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[147] On the office, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 111-13.

[148] Genesius, 97_{10-11}, gives the year and the indiction (ἐν ἡμέραις τοῦ πάσχα, ἰνδικτιῶνι, ι΄); Georgius Continuatus, 824_{3-11}; (= 862); see V. Grumel, Traite d'études Byzantines, I: La Chronologie (Paris, 1958), p. 251. Easter was on the 19th of April; ibid., p. 276. Opposed to this date is Vogt, Basile I, who favors 865 or 866.

[149] On the role of Damianus in the murder of Theoctistus, see Georgius Continuatus, 821_{14}-822_{18}; Pseudo-Symeon, 657_{13-24}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 198; Leo Grammaticus, 235-36. On the murder itself, see Genesius, 87-90; Theophanes Continuatus, 168-70. On the office of Grand Chamberlain, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 124-25. He says that they were usually eunuchs who slept adjacent to the emperor's bedroom. See, also, Guilland, Institutions, I, 202-04.

[150] I believe that the falling out occurred after Bardas became Caesar. Adontz, Byzantion, 8, 497, feels that it was due solely to the fact that Damianus did not receive the post which Theoctistus held previously. This I can accept in part, but the event occurred in 855-856, or six years earlier. Another incident must have touched off or, better, rekindled an old grudge which, I conjecture, was Bardas' new promotion. I therefore believe the incident occurred in late spring or early summer of 862.

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men reached its actual climax when Caesar Bardas, attired in a wine-colored skaramangion (μετὰ σκαραμαγγίου ὀξέος), passed through the Horologion in a procession.[151] Damianus, who witnessed the event, did not rise from his seat in token respect. Angered by this insult, Bardas immediately went to the Chrysotriklinos and protested to the emperor, who ordered Damianus to be arrested and tonsured.[152] The vacant post of High Chamberlain now passed to Basil, who was also given the dignity of Patrician.[153]

This event was the greatest piece of good fortune which befell Basil. For the confidential office of Grand Chamberlain enabled him an even greater opportunity to further his ambitions. Since he was now in constant attendance to the emperor, he was in a better position to gain influence. One must not interpret this as a sign of weakness on the part of Michael. The portrait of this emperor has suffered much distortion and exaggeration in Macedonian

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[151] Georgius Continuatus, 827_{11-14}. See, also, Vita Basilii, 234_{7-24}-235_{1-16}, where he is called a Slav (τῷ γένει Σκλάβον); Pseudo-Symeon, 675_{4-12}.

[152] Ibid., 827_{14-22}. On the Chrysotriklinos, see J. B. Bury, "The Great Palace," B.Z., 21 (1912), 210-25. In this period it had superseded the Daphne as the center of court life and ceremonial. See, also, J. Ebersolt, Le Grand Palais de Constantinople et le livre des cérémonies (Paris, 1910), pp. 160ff. (See drawing of palace in Appendix.)

[153] Georgius Continuatus, 827_{23} (Βασίλειος ὁ πρωτοστράτωρ παρακοιμώμενος). The fall that he was made a Patrician is mentioned by the Vita Basilii, 235_{15} (τιμήσας αὐτὸν καὶ πατρικίου); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 197-98.

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tradition.[154] Consequently, what has survived in the accounts of the court historians is a tissue of lies and half-truths, compiled simply to justify Basil's murder of his benefactor. The characterization of Michael in the Vita Basilii, for example, is purely fictional. Borrowing from Plutarchian models, Constantine depicts Michael as a man who possesses the worst attributes of Antony and Nero.[155] In conclusion, Michael appears as a monarch who has not only disgraced but has degraded the dignity of the imperial office[156] through his revelry,[157] his licentiousness[158] his mania for charioteering,[159] his wasteful

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[154]The character of Michael has been considerably altered by the researches of the following scholars: Grégoire, Byzantion, 4, 437-68; Grégoire, ibid., 5, 327-46; Grégoire, ibid., 8, 515-50; H. Grégoire, "Etudes sur l'épopee byzantine," Revue des études grecques, 46 (1933), 29-69; F. Dvornik, "Lettre à M. H. Grégoire à propos de Michel III et les mosaiques de S. Sophia," Byzantion, 10 (1935), 5-9; A. A. Vasiliev, The Russian Attack on Constantinople in 860 (Cambridge, Mass., 1946), pp. 152ff.; Vasiliev, Byzantina Metabyzantina, 1, Part I, 237-48; Jenkins, Bulletin de la classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques, 34, 71-77.

[155]Ibid., pp. 72-73, has illustrated that in vocabulary, conjunctive phrases, the arrangement of material, etc., the Vita Basilii betrays the influence of Plutarch's Life of Antony and the lost Life of Nero.

[156]Vita Basilii, 243_{4-5}, expressly says this (Καὶ τὴν τοῦ βασιλικοῦ μεγέθους ἀτιμάσας σεμνότητα,)

[157]Ibid., 243_{5}; also 251_{8-22}-252_{1-23}. Genesius, 113_{1}, mentions his οἰνοφλυγίου ; Michael Glycas, 541, 546, calls him the "Drunkard" (μεθυστής).

[158]Vita Basilii, 243_{6-8}, mentions this briefly, for Constantine's grandmother, Eudocia, was Michael's mistress; therefore there was some cause for embarrassment here.

[159]Ibid., 243_{6-8} (ἔτι δὲ περὶ ἡνιόχους καὶ ἵππους καὶ ἅρματα καὶ τὴν ἐντεῦθεν μανίαν καὶ παρακοπὴν τῶν φρενῶν). Georgius Continuatus, 835_{4-10}, adds that Michael had a private track at St. Mamas where he raced as a blue charioteer (ἱππεύσας βένετος). This fact is

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extravagance,[160] his buffoonery,[161] and even his disregard for religious sanctity.[162]

The real Michael seems to have been a man of energy and initiative who was extremely popular.[163] In war he

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also mentioned by Genesius, 112, and Theophanes Continuatus, 197-98 (to further slander Michael, he adds here that on one occasion Michael even discontinued the fire signals from Asia Minor because they interrupted his sport by an inopportune message). The Hippodrome is never mentioned by our sources as used by Michael for his charioteering. The most recent study on the Hippodrome is by R. Guilland, "Études sur l'Hippodrome de Byzance," Byzantinoslavica, 23 (1962), 203-30; 25 (1964), 234-54; 26 (1965), 1-39; 27 (1966), 26-40, 289-307; 28 (1967), 262-77.

[160] Theophanes Continuatus, 172_{7-15}, tells that he often stood sponsor at the baptism of his jockeys' children and bestowed on them large sums of money (Πεντήκοντα δὲ καὶ τεσσαράκοντα καὶ τὸ ἐλάχιστον ἑκάστῳ τριάκοντα χρυσίου λίτρας ἐπιλοπαγῶν). The Vita Basilii, 253_{1-22}, mentions among other things the fortune which he gave to his jockey Cheilas. It is also related that he rewarded Himerius in a similar manner for a jest. Elsewhere, 257_{1-14}, Constantine tells that his wastefulness resulted in financial straits which led him to lay his hands on some of his father's art treasures. Thus he began to melt down the golden plane tree (χρυσῆν...πλάτανον) with its mechanical birds, the two golden lions (δύο χρυσοὺς λέοντος) and two griffins (δύο ὁλοχρύσους γρῦπας), and the gold organ (τὸ ὁλοχρύσου ὄργανον).

[161] Ibid., 243_{10-13}, mentions his joking and buffoonery.

[162] Ibid., 244-46, and the Vita Ignatii, 246. Constantine records that one of Michael's companions known as the Pig (γρῦλλου) (the Vita Ignatii mentions his name as Theophilus) would frequently impersonate the Patriarch. He, the emperor, and others dressed as prominent bishops would consecrate and depose bishops and even profane the Eucharist by using, instead of the holy elements, mustard and vinegar (τοίνυν σίναπι καὶ ὄξος..., 245_{12}). On one occasion these antics brought them face to face with the real patriarch, Ignatius, who was leading a religious procession. Thereupon they (he calls them satyrs) raised their hoods and began to play their instruments and sing lewd songs, which disturbed the hymns of the pious procession.

[163] The popularity of Michael has been shown by both Grégoire and Vasiliev (see n. 154), who have shown how his memory has survived in popular folklore.

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distinguished himself in the successful campaigns of 856-859.[164] Inscriptions from Ancyra and Nicaea, dated 858 and 859, show that the emperor had made prudent preparations for this offensive by attending to the defenses of the empire not only to protect the territory but to afford protection to his army in case of defeat.[165] In his religious policy he showed initiative by bringing about the conversion of the Bulgars and spreading Christianity among the Slavs.[166] Michael also surrounded himself with many talented advisors and collaborators, among whom were his uncles, Caesar Bardas, the Chief Minister of State, and Petronas, the victor of Poson, and some imposing intellectuals such as Leo the Philosopher and above all, Photius. This evidence hardly reveals a monster leading the "State" to its destruction as the court historians would have posterity believe.

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[164]The royal court historians have deputed this expedition as a failure, but the Arab historian Tabari has given credit for Michael's victory.

[165]Grégoire, Byzantion, 4, 437-68; Grégoire, ibid., 5, 327-46.

[166]On the conversion of the Bulgars, see Runciman, The First Bulgarian Empire, pp. 104ff.; Bury, E.R.E., pp. 381-92; A. Vaillant and M. Lascaris, "La date de la conversion des Bulgares," Revue des études slaves, 13 (1933), 5ff. The most recent discussion of the Slavs can be found in D.O.P., 19 (1965), by the following scholars: G. Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Background of the Moravian Mission," pp. 1-18; G. C. Soulis, "The Legacy of Cyril and Methodius to the Southern Slavs," pp. 19-43; A. Dostál, "The Heritage of Cyril and Methodius in Russia," pp. 45-65; R. Jacobsen, "The Byzantine Mission to the Slavs," pp. 257-65. Also see, on this, K. Swaboda, "L'origine de l'organisation de l'Église en Bulgarie et ses rapports avec le patriarcat de Constantinople 870-919, Byzantino-Bulgarica, 2 (1966), 67-81.

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He probably did have some undesirable qualities which led him to indulge in excesses. To what degree these have been exaggerated is difficult to ascertain, but they must have had some historical basis. They were probably natural, for Michael was not only a young man in the prime of life, but also one invested with absolute power.[167]

In the years which followed his promotion to High Chamberlain, Basil furthered his insatiable ambition by taking advantage of Michael's friendship and confidence. Realizing that his goals could be further advanced by acquiescing in the emperor's whims, Basil was ready to sacrifice everything--even friendship and marriage. When Michael suggested to him that he should marry his former mistress, Eudocia Ingerina, Basil promptly divorced his wife Maria, whom he sent back to Macedonia with an appropriate compensation.[168] Eudocia apparently remained Michael's mistress, for scandalous rumors implied, as if it were a known fact, that the future Emperor Leo VI, the Wise, was his son and not Basil's.[169] A mistress, however, was also provided for Basil. She was Michael's older sister Thecla,

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[167]To say more about Michael is beyond the scope of this study.

[168]Georgius Continuatus, 828_{3-4} (ἐχώρισε βασίλειον ὁ Μιχαὴλ τῆς ἰδίας γυναικὸς Μαρίας, δεδωκὼς αὐτῷ γυναῖκα Εὐδοκίαν τὴν Ἰγγερῖναν). Later he relates of Basil's divorce, and the departure of Maria to Macedonia with a settlement (1. 7) (Μαρίᾳ δοὺς χρυσίον καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ ἀπέστειλεν ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ ...).

[169]Ibid., 835_{4-6}. He records that Leo VI, who was born on September 1, 866, was the son of Michael and Eudocia.

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who apparently consented to become Basil's paramour in order to escape monastic life.[170] The marriage probably took place not long after Basil's promotion; i.e., in the year 862 or 863 at the latest.[171]

The new confidential intimacy, which resulted from the wife-swapping antics of the emperor and his new Chamberlain, gave Basil an added assurance that he could drive for even more power. A devious plan now evolved in the mind of this clever and unscrupulous adventurer. One obstacle had to be hurdled if he were to be successful. He had to eliminate Caesar Bardas, the man who guided the ship of state. To achieve this was no easy matter, for the Caesar had the support of a strong party and the devotion of the emperor, who depended on him for guidance.[172] Basil needed a clique

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[170] Ibid., 828_{8-9} (Θεκλαν δὲ τὴν ἰδίαν ἀδελφὴν προσήρμοσε βασιλείῳ τοῦ ἔχειν ἰδίως). Earlier she was exiled to a monastery (ibid., 823_{5-9}) with her sisters. Later when she became the mistress of John Neatokometes, she was beaten and lost her property, while he was tonsured; ibid., 842_{3-11}. Thecla was probably older than Basil at the time she became his mistress. On the chronology of the family of Theophilus, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 465-68.

[171] Basil's marriage followed closely after his promotion to the office of High Chamberlain and the dignity of Patrician. I estimate it to be during the year 862 or at the latest 863. My calculations are based on the fact that Eudocia already had two children from Basil prior to Michael's death (although one is attributed to be Michael's (see Georgius Continuatus, 835_{33}, 844_{18}). In addition, she was in the seventh month of her pregnancy when Michael was killed on September 24, 867, for her son Stephen was born in November, 867 (see Jenkins, D.O.P., 19, 99-100). Since approximately fifteen months must be allowed separating each birth, Eudocia and Basil must have been married at least four years if not longer.

[172] Among his supporters must be included Photius, who owed his position to him, Leo the Mathematician, Petronas and his son Antigonus, who was Domestic of the Schools.

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to assist him in his scheme. Astutely reasoning that loyalties begin at home, he used his influence at court to obtain posts for his brothers--Bardas, Marianus, and Symbatius--and also his nephew, Asylaeon.[173] Others who were Armenians like himself were also won over to his confidence. Initially, they were Peter the Bulgarian, Constantine Toxaras, and John Chaldus, called also Tziphinarites.[174]

With this small circle of supporters Basil put the next phase of his plan into action; namely, the undermining of Caesar Bardas' position as chief minister. Exploiting the atmosphere of intrigue at court as well as Michael's suspicions, he initiated a campaign of whispers and innuendos which made it appear to the emperor that the Caesar was plotting to overthrow him.[175] At first these insinuations had no apparent effect. Perhaps Michael believed that it was just court gossip or, it may be, he was not yet convinced because of past services and the trust which he had in his uncle. Where some would have been exasperated by a similar setback, Basil was undeterred and merely decided

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[173] According to Theodosius of Melitene, 170, his brothers were Bardas, Marianus and Symbatius (Μαριανὸς ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ Συμβάτιος καὶ βάρδας). In addition there was a nephew, Asylaeon (Ἀσυλεών ὁ ἐξάδελφος αὐτοῦ). See, also, Georgius Continuatus, 837_{11-13}; Pseudo-Symeon, 688_{2} (here Asylaeon is called brother of the emperor).

[174] The five original conspirators are given by Symeon (Georgius Continuatus, 830_{3-5}). Genesius, 106_{15}, mentions also that John Chaldus was called Tziphinarites. According to Adontz, Byzantion, 9, 229-30, they were Armenians; see n. 1 where he points out that Tziphi = Armenian Cphni .

[175] Georgius Continuatus, 828_{10-13}.

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in a cold and calculating way to pursue his objective by another more devious course. One may say that he took one step backward in order to take two forward later. Discerning that Michael would remain unconvinced of any plot by the Caesar unless more trustworthy evidence could be obtained, Basil's Machivellian mind concocted a scheme with the precision of a watchmaker. The key to the success of his plan, however, depended on how astutely he gauged the atmosphere of the court and the apprehensiveness of Michael. By himself he could not succeed. He needed the assistance of a person above and beyond suspicion who was related to the imperial family. This person would have to be endowed with the same insatiable ambition as Basil himself. This character fault would then have to be stimulated and exploited, but the real objective must be concealed from him; as a matter of fact, he must not even suspect it. In the Armenian Symbatius, the Logothete of the Course and son-in-law of Caesar Bardas himself, Basil found just such a man.[176]

Cultivating the friendship of Symbatius, Basil excited in him the hope of replacing his father-in-law as Caesar. Overwhelmed and blinded by his own ambition, Symbatius trusted Basil and together they fabricated a plot which they revealed to Michael. Such evidence, derived not only from a high-ranking official but from Bardas' son-in-law himself, had sufficient weight to convince Michael. Alarmed, he

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[176] Ibid., 228_{17}. On the office of Logothete of the Course, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 91-93.

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unsuspectingly acquiesced in a plot to murder his uncle. He may have even encouraged Basil to carry it out.[177]

It seems almost unbelievable that whispers of these machinations were not in some way brought to the attention of Bardas. He must have dismissed them as court gossip at first. Perhaps he misjudged Basil's own capabilities, since he owed so much to his physical strength and Michael's favor. It may be conjectured also that his preparations for the recovery of Crete put him off guard.[178]

Since the reign of Michael II (820-829), this strategic island had been in the hands of the Arabs. However, the position of the empire on both land and sea had been significantly altered. On land the Arabs had been driven back to the Euphrates by the vigorous feats of Byzantine arms. At sea the Byzantine fleet had not only recovered the mastery of the Aegean but even threatened Egypt.[179] These favorable

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[177] Georgius Continuatus, 829_{1-10}.

[178] The fall of Crete is described by the relevant literature between the years 823-828. On the subject, see A. A. Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 49ff.; Bury, E.R.E., 287-94; E. W. Brooks, "The Arab Occupation of Crete," E.H.R., 28 (1913), 431-53; Grégoire, Byzantion, 8, 515-50; J. Papadopoulos, Crete under the Arabs (Athens, 1948), pp. 71-72 (in Greek); H. Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, "L'administration militaire de la Crète byzantine," Byzantion, 31 (1961), 220-21; H. Ahrweiler, Byzance et la Mer (Paris, 1966), pp. 111-14.

[179] On the feats of Byzantine arms on sea and on land, see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes; the numerous works of Grégoire, who has tried to rehabilitate Michael; G. Levi dell Vida, "A Papyrus Reference to the Damietta Raid of 853 A.D.," Byzantion, 17 (1944-1945), 212-21; Ahrweiler, Byzance et la Mer, pp. 17-135.

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circumstances convinced Bardas that the time was ripe for the recovery of Crete. Preparations were carefully made. Bardas, who was entangled in carrying out all of the details of this campaign, did not realize that his own position at court had been undermined and that his life was in danger.

In the spring of 866, as the preparations were nearing completion, a certain apprehensiveness caused Bardas to draw back from his participation in the campaign. Perhaps the warnings of his friend, Leo the Philosopher, finally convinced him that the court rumors were not just gossip.[180] The conspirators, however, convinced Michael that his uncle's fears must be allayed if they were to succeed.[181] Conjecturally it may be said that Bardas' position in the city was too strong to attack openly. Perhaps his popularity and his party were too great. For these reasons the conspirators felt that a plot could be more carefully and effectively executed away from the capital.[182] Bardas had to be reassured, for a better opportunity might not present itself. To this end the emperor, Basil, and Caesar Bardas entered

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[180] Georgius Continuatus, 829_{7-10}, also records a warning. Genesius, 105_{11-18}, also records a warning and on 104-05 records an omen of Bardas' short life by describing a dress sent him by his mother which was too short.

[181] Georgius Continuatus, 829_{11-12}. Officially it was recorded that Bardas prepared the plot to kill Michael. This is mentioned by Symeon; ibid., 832_{12-15}. Elsewhere Symeon says that Michael and Basil planned the expedition to kill Bardas. Genesius, 103_{9-13}, tells that it was organized by Bardas. In my opinion, the latter account is correct, and an expedition was prepared. Later the conspirators decided to use this as an opportunity to kill Bardas.

[182] Symeon hints at this in his narrative.

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the Church of the Virgin in Chalkoprateia (Χαλκοπρατείᾳ) on the festival of the Annunciation. After the ceremonies the three men entered the katechumena (κατηχουμένοις) of the church where, before the Patriarch Photius, who held in his hands the blood of Christ (ἐπὶ χείραι ἔχοντος τὸ τίμιον αἷμα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), Basil and Michael subscribed with crosses (ὑπέγραψαν σταυρούς) to a declaration that Bardas could accompany them without fear.[183] Although Bardas was again warned by Leo the Philosopher, he agreed to go as originally planned.[184] Bardas may have hoped to undermine the position of his enemies and at the same time enhance his own stature by a resounding victory.[185]

The expedition started after Easter (April 7, 866) and the Byzantine forces assembled in the Thracesion theme at a place called Kepoi (κήπους).[186] There on the banks of the Maeander River the conspirators prepared to carry out

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[183] Georgius Continuatus, 829_{11-18}.

[184] Ibid., 829_{18-20}. The most recent study on Leo is by E. Lipšic, "Vizantijskij učenyj Lev Matematik," V.V., 2 (1949), 106-49.

[185] Grégoire, in Cambridge Medieval History, IV, 115, is of the opinion that Basil was driven to destroy Bardas for fear of a resounding victory, which would certainly increase his popularity among both the populace and the soldiery.

[186] Georgius Continuatus, 829_{21-22} (ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα ... ἐν τῷ θέματι τῶν Θρακησίων ... εἰς κήπους) 830_{1-2}. On dating, see Grumel, op. cit., charts. Kepoi is on the Maeander River; see W. Ramsey, The Historical Geography of Asia Minor (Amsterdam, 1962), p. 111. (Hereafter cited as Ramsay, Historical Geography.) It is also mentioned in Theophanes Continuatus, 204; Genesius, 103; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 198.

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their coup.[187] Only one obstacle presented some difficulty. This was the presence of the Domestic of the Schools, Antigonus, the son of Bardas.[188] To forestall him from coming to the rescue of his father, the conspirators prepared a diversion. Antigonus was drawn off to observe a horse race which was held some distance from the imperial tent.[189] Bardas received several warnings of impending danger. First, as already noted, he was cautioned by his sister Theodora. Then, on the evening of April 20, 866, John Neatokometes appeared at the tent of the Caesar and warned Procopius, his Protovestarius (i.e., Keeper of the Wardrobe), that his master would be cut to pieces by assailants. Bardas ignored this information with the remark, "Tell Neatokometes that he is foolish. I know that he is young and not worthy of the dignity of patrician--that is why he is stirring up darnels."[190] During the night, Bardas was sleepless (ἄυπνος), and at dawn spoke of this matter

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[187] Genesius, 106_{13-15}, implies that the plot was first conceived at Kepoi. The occasion was the fact that Bardas pitched his tent higher than the emperor's. This, however, must be dismissed in the light of Symeon's more impartial account.

[188] On the Domestic of the Schools, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 49-57. Undoubtedly he caused the conspirators some difficulties, for in the ninth century he was often the commander-in-chief of the whole army. See, also, Guilland, Institutions, I, 426-68.

[189] Genesius, 106_{2-5}.

[190] Georgius Continuatus, 830_{5-8}. He says it would take place on the next day (ὅτι αὔριον μεγάλην κατακόπτεται). Procopius was his Protovestarius. On this office, see Bury, I.A.S., p. 125, and Guilland, Institutions, I, 216-36.

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to his friends. Philotheos, the Protospatharius and general, reassured him with these words, "Put on your golden peach-colored coat and behold your enemies and they will flee from your face."[191] With his confidence restored by Philotheos' suggestion, Bardas mounted his horse and rode to the emperor's pavilion with his entourage.[192] The day was April 21, 866.[193] When Bardas arrived he was greeted by Basil, who paid his respects to the Caesar (προσεκύνησεν). Then Basil led him by the hand, as it was customary, to Michael. Taking his place beside the emperor, Bardas opened the conversation with the suggestion that as all the troops were already assembled they should immediately embark for Crete.[194] Before the discussion proceeded any further the assailants dispatched him. In our sources there are three different variations on this crime. I would guess that the account of Symeon is nearer to the truth, for he, unlike the court historians, had little to conceal. In his account, Basil struck the first blow; then the other conspirators joined in to finish off the Caesar.[195] The report of Genesius is different in that he entirely suppresses Basil's role in the murder. According to him, after Bardas

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[191] Georgius Continuatus, 830_{12-17} (Περι βαλοῦ τὸν χρυσοπέρσικόν σου χιτῶνα καὶ ὄψθητι τοῖς ἐχθροῖς σου, καὶ ἀπὸ προσώπου σου φεύξονται

[192] Ibid., 831_{1-2}.

[193] Date is given only by Genesius, 106_{15} (μηνὶ ἀπριλλίῳ κα', ἰνδικτιῶνι ιδ'.)

[194] Georgius Continuatus, 831_{3-4}. [195] Ibid., 831_{4-8}.

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took his place beside Michael on April 21, 866, Symbatius, the Logothete of the Course, entered and proceeded to read some reports. Completing the business of the day, he left but made the sign of the cross (τύπῳ σταυρικῷ σχηματισαμένου), which was the signal for the assassins to strike. Emerging from their hiding place with flashing swords, they immediately dispatched the Caesar, who was taken completely unaware.[196] To add further indignity to their crime, they jubilantly paraded his genitals on a pole.[197] The speed of the assailants even frightened the emperor, says Genesius, but he was protected from harm by Constantine, the Drungarius of the Watch.[198] The Vita Basilii has yet a different version of this. According to Constantine, his grandfather played a part in the assassination of Bardas, but it was only nominal. Michael, he says, was the true organizer of the plot, and it was he who gave the signal to Symbatius to introduce the assailants. When they hesitated, he adds, Michael ordered Basil to instigate them because he feared for his own safety.[199]

Michael then wrote to the Patriarch Photius that the Caesar had been put to death because of his treasonous

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[196]Genesius, 106_{5-16}.

[197]Ibid., 107_{3} (τὰ τούτου αἰδοῖα κοντῷ διαρτήσαντες ἐθριάμβευον

[198]Ibid., 106_{17-21}. Genesius would, of course, say this for Constantine was his grandfather.

[199]Vita Basilii, 235-38, chap. xvii, describes the murder of Bardas.

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intention. In a response to this letter, Photius promptly congratulated the emperor on his escape from this plot against his life, but concluded with an urgent prayer that Michael should instantly return to the capital.[200] The sense of urgency and suspicion which is found in this letter displays above all the Patriarch's concern for the emperor's well-being. He may have feared that Michael would share the fate of Bardas.[201] Whether or not Photius influenced Michael in any way is uncertain. The proposed Cretan expedition was abandoned, and the emperor made provisions to return.

Three days later, according to Symeon, Michael and Basil entered the city, where a multitude of people greeted the emperor.[202] An incident almost marred this occasion, for a monk harangued Michael for the murder of Bardas.[203] The murder of Bardas was the crowning achievement of Basil's career, for it not only removed the only obstacle to his advancement, but it had also convinced Michael that he owed his life to the wily adventurer. Basil reaped the reward of his craft and audacity and was adopted as Michael's son as well as promoted to the dignity of Magister.[204] A few

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[200] Photius, Epistolae, ed. Migne, P.G. 102, letter 221.

[201] This can be seen from yet another brief dispatch which followed; ibid., letter 222.

[202] Georgius Continuatus, 831_9 (Ὥρα δὲ ἦν τρίτη τῆς ἡμέρας.)

[203] Ibid., 831_{14-15} ("Καλὸν ταξείδιον ἐποιήσας, ὦ βασιλεῦ, τὸν ἴδιον συγγενῆ καὶ τὸ πατρῷον αἷμα ξίφει ἀνελών. Οὐαί σοι, οὐαί σοι, ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίησας")

[204] Vita Basilii, 238_{11-14}. On the dignity of the Magister, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 29-33.

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weeks later he received an even higher reward, for Michael decided to elevate him to the throne as co-emperor. Apparently everything was kept secret. Basil may have wanted to forestall any embarrassing action on the part of Symbatius, the Logothete of the Course. Late Saturday, May 25, 866, the Keeper of the Private Wardrobe, Rentiakes, was sent to inform Photius that the emperor planned to make Basil co-emperor.[205] On the following day, May 26, 866, people in the Church of Saint Sophia saw that instead of one imperial seat there were two. The emperor then entered, followed by Basil arrayed as the High Chamberlain (παρακοιμωμένοις). As everyone must have observed, Michael did not remove his crown (οὐκ ἀπέθετο τὸ στέφος) but went straight to the ambo. Basil stood below him, and the secretary (ἀσηκρῆτις), Leo Castor, the Praepositus, the demarchs (οἱ δήμαρχοι), and the demes stood about.[206] Leo then read a document:

> Caesar Bardas plotted against me to kill me, and for this reason induced me to leave the city. If I had not been informed of the plot by Symbatius and Basil, I would not be alive now. He [Bardas] died because of his own guilt. I wish, therefore, that Basil, the High Chamberlain, since he is faithful to me and protects my realm and delivered me from my enemy and has great love for me, should be the guardian and manager of my Empire and should be proclaimed by all as Emperor.[207]

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[205] Georgius Continuatus, 831_{21-23} (ὀψὲ δὲ παρέτυχε τῆς πεντηκοστῆς . . .). Pentecost was on May 26 that year. On the office of the Protovestarius, see Bury, I.A.S., p. 125; Guilland, Institutions, I, 216-36, especially p. 218.

[206] Georgius Continuatus, 832_{1-11}. On the office of the Praepositus, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 123-24; Guilland, Institutions, I, 300-21. On the demarchs, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 105-06.

[207] Georgius Continuatus, 832_{12-19}.

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Next Michael removed his crown and gave it to Photius, who placed it on the holy table (ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ Τραπέζῃ) and recited a prayer over it. Basil was then arrayed in the diaitesion and boots and knelt before the emperor. Photius then crowned Michael, who crowned Basil.[208] The crowd followed with acclamation: "Many years to Michael and Basil!"[209] The coronation of Eudocia Ingerina as empress must have followed soon after that of Basil, since this was customary.

The coronation of Basil as emperor must have been a complete shock to Symbatius, the Logothete of the Course. Now for the first time he realized that, in the game of court intrigue, Basil was master, and he was the dupe. He could say nothing, for his role was more despicable than Basil's. Realizing that he would not be promoted to the rank of Caesar, Symbatius became more incensed at the manner in which he had been outmaneuvered. In the capital he could do little, for Basil had strengthened his position by winning others to his side. Among them were relatives and fellow Armenians.[210] I would guess that it was during this period that Antigonus, the son of Bardas, was relieved of

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[208] Ibid., 833$_{1-5}$. Symeon says Photius took the crown from the emperor's head and placed it on Basil's. Leo Grammaticus, 246, says Photius gave it to the emperor. According to Bury, the latter is closer to the original; see Bury, Constitution of the Later Roman Empire, p. 16.

[209] Μιχαὴλ καὶ Βασιλείου πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη "
The ceremony is also described in the De Ceremoniis, 194.

[210] Georgius Continuatus, 837, mentions their names. Among them now appears Bardas, the father of the Rector, Basil, and also Jakovitzes, a Persian.

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his command as Domestic of the Schools, for this post could hardly have been held by the son of the murdered Caesar.[211] Perhaps it was now that Basil's brother Marianus succeeded him.[212] Symbatius retained some hope of turning the tables on Basil. With the army, Bardas' popularity was high, and Symbatius endeavored to take advantage of this before the memory of the great Caesar died.[213]

Shortly after the coronation, Symbatius obtained from Michael the generalship of the Thracesion theme and for his associate, George Peganes, the post of Count of the Opsikion theme.[214] These two then combined their resources to overthrow Basil. Ravaging as they went, they marched for Constantinople, carefully declaring their allegiance to Michael but denouncing Basil.[215] Against the ability of the masterful Basil, the revolt had little chance of success. Basil turned this incident into a further advantage by illustrating

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[211] Since the Domestic was often the commander-in-chief of the army, Antigonus could not be left in such a responsible position. On this, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 49-57; Guilland, Institutions, I, 426-29.

[212] In De Ceremoniis, 648, Marianus is called Domestic of the Schools. If one recalls that Petronas Bardas' brother held this post earlier, the precedent for this conjecture appears plausible.

[213] Grégoire, in Cambridge Medieval History, IV, 117.

[214] Georgius Continuatus, 833_{10-15}; Vita Basilii, 238_{11-19}, 240_{5-10}.

[215] Georgius Continuatus, 833_{15-19} (καταστρέφειν τὸν λαὸν καὶ πορπολεῖν τὰς τε χώρας καὶ ἀμπέλους (ἦν γὰρ καιρὸς τοῦ θέρους), εὐφημοῦντας Μιχαὴλ μόνον, τὸν δὲ Βασίλειον ἀποκαρύττοντας). This was in the summer, for it was harvest time (ἦν γὰρ καιρὸς τοῦ θέρους).

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to Michael his unaltering loyalty. The emperors ordered the other generals to crush the rebellion and sent Nicepherus Maleinus to induce the troops of the rebels to desert them.[216] A little later George Peganes was captured. The prefect (ἔπαρχος) of the capital, Constantine Myares, was ordered to put out his eyes, and as a further public degradation he was placed in the Milion (μιλίῳ) in the Augusteon (see map) and given a bowl to collect alms.[217] Thirty days later (καὶ μεθ' ἡμέρας λ') Symbatius was captured by Maleinus in an inn at Keltzine.[218] According to Symeon, when Symbatius was brought into the city, George Peganes was brought to him holding an earthen censer and then proceeded to fumigate him with sulfur.[219] Symbatius was then blinded in one eye and had his right hand cut off. Like Peganes, he too was placed outside of the Palace of Lausos to beg.[220] After three days of humiliation, they were returned to their homes but kept under house arrest.[221]

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[216] Ibid., 833_{19}-834_{1}. He used circulars.

[217] Ibid., 834_{2-6}; Vita Basilii, 241_{9-10}, records that his nose was also slit (τῇ τῶν ῥινῶν διὰ ξίφους).

[218] Georgius Continuatus, 834_{7-8} (ὑπὸ Μαλεΐνου ἐν Κελτζινῇ ἐν πανδοχείῳ). On the location of the place, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 316. According to the Vita Basilii, 240_{22-23}, he occupied the fort called τῆς Πλατείας γεγομένης and Peganes was sent to Cotyaeum.

[219] Georgius Continuatus, 834_{11} (θυμιατήριον ὀστράκινον μετὰ θειαφίου θυμιάν αὐτόν.)

[220] Ibid., 834_{13} (εἰς τὰ Λαύσου).

[221] Ibid., 834_{15-16}.

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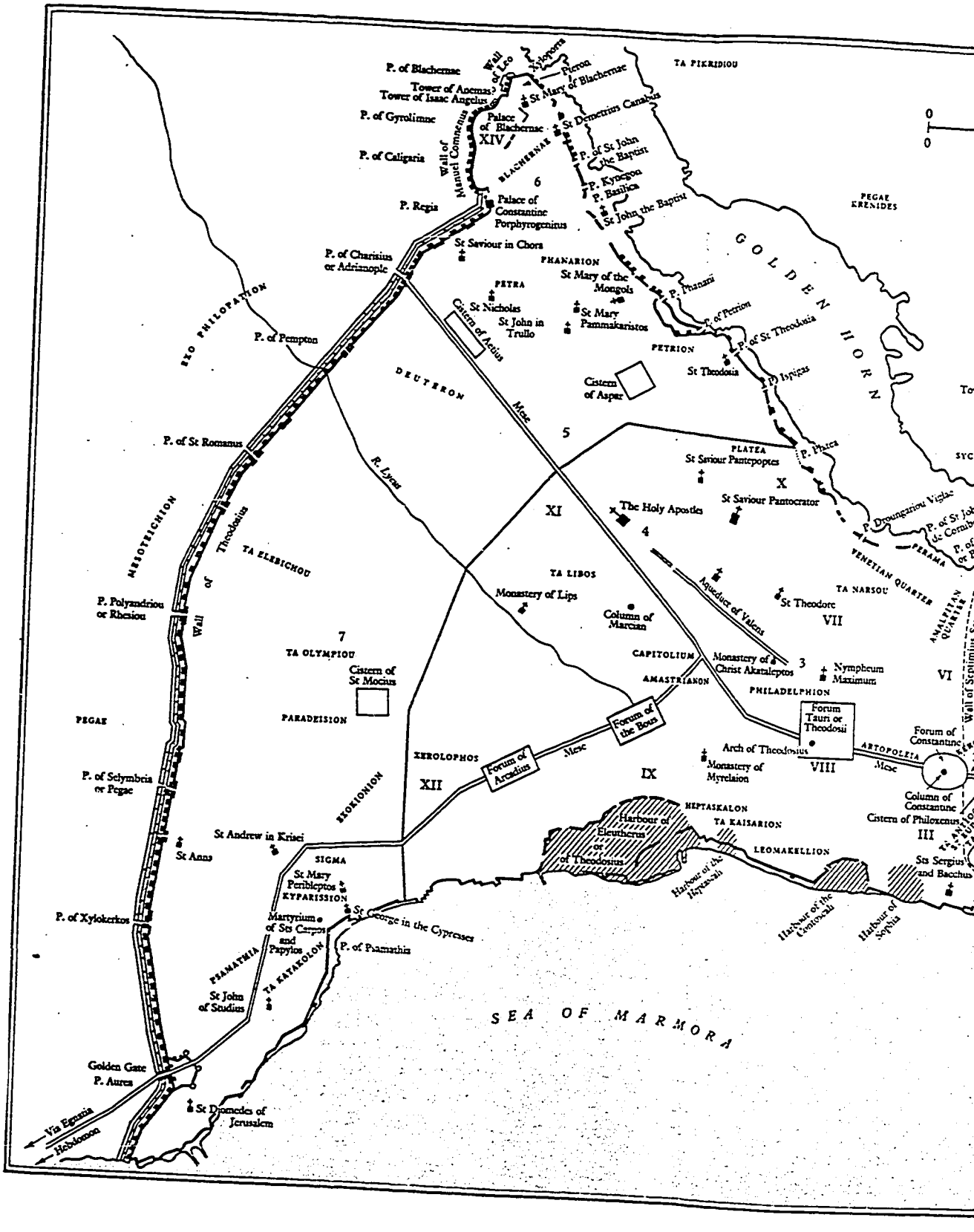

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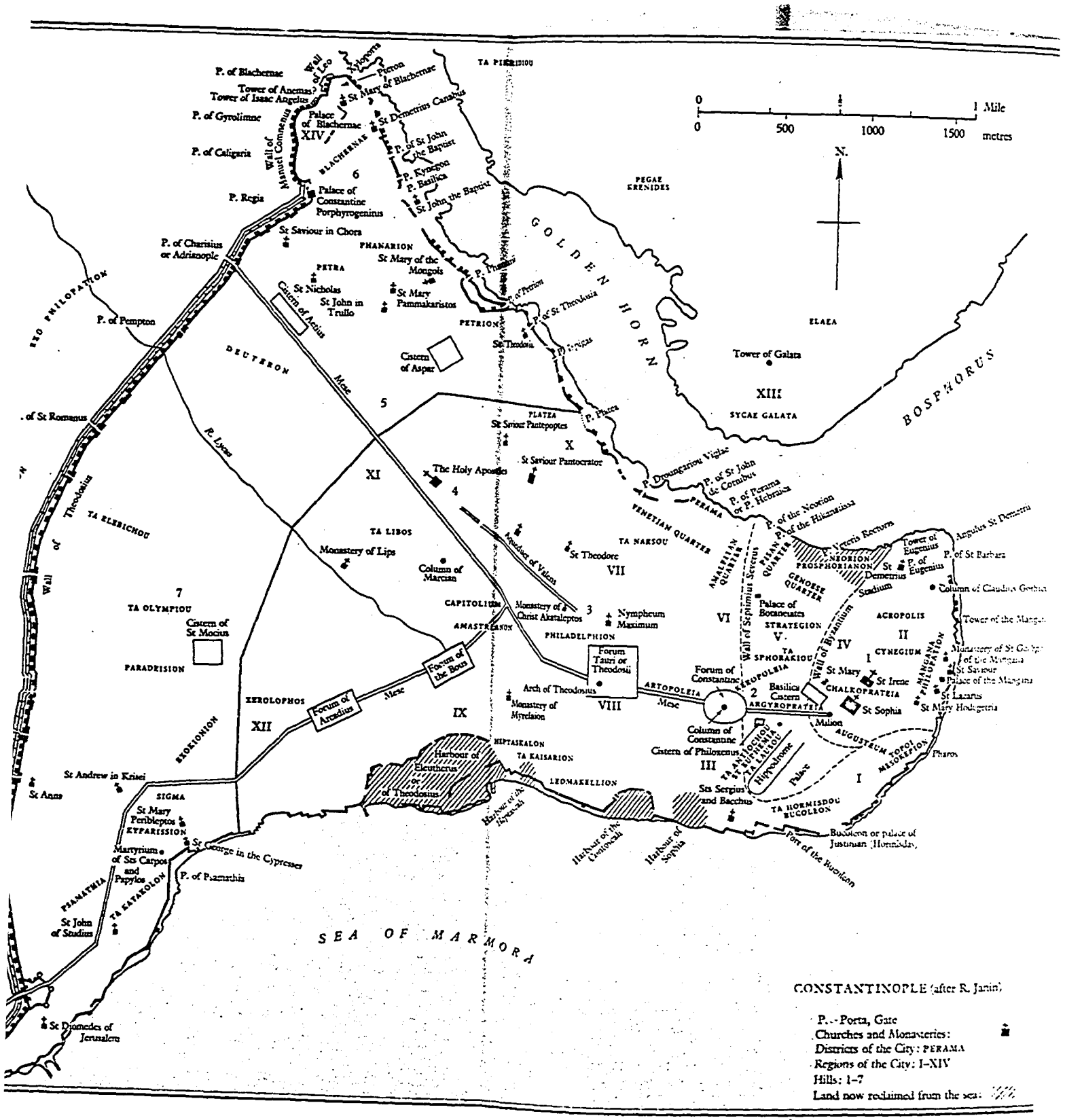

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The joint reign of Michael and Basil lasted a year and four months. It is apparent that Basil had no hostile motive against his benefactor at first, but little by little their relations became strained. Michael may have grown remorseful over the death of the uncle whose guidance seemed so impeccable. It may be that a whisper or an innuendo at court caused him to reconsider his own position. It could be that he realized that he too had been duped by his wily colleague, who was now strengthening his position daily. Whatever the reason, the first sign of the growing strain between the two men occurred on September 1, 867.[222] According to Symeon, who again is our best authority, Michael held a race at the Palace of St. Mamas. The occasion was the birth of Leo VI, who, Symeon claims, was his son by Eudocia Ingerina.[223] Michael, arrayed as a blue charioteer, challenged three other nobles. Among them were Constantine the Armenian--the Drungarius of the Watch--Agalianus, and Krusas. These men represented, respectively, the other three factions of the Circus; namely, the white, green, and red.[224] Michael won the race and celebrated his victory with a feast which was attended, among others, by Basil and Eudocia Ingerina. During the dinner, Basiliskianus, a patrician, complimented Michael on his driving skill.

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[222] Ibid., 835_{5-6}.

[223] Here Symeon must be inaccurate, at least in the case of the birth of Leo, for Eudocia was seven months pregnant at this time with Basil's third son, Stephen.

[224] Ibid., 835_{6-10}.

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Michael, delighted by this flattery, ordered him to stand up and take his red boots from his feet and put them on. He hesitated and looked over to Basil, who signalled him not to obey. Michael then furiously ordered him to do as he was told, and turning to Basil said, "The boots fit him better than you. I have made you Emperor, and have I not the power to create another Emperor if I will?"[225] Eudocia with tears said to the emperor, "The Imperial dignity is great, and we, unworthy as we are, have been honored with it. It is not right that it should be brought into contempt." Annoyed by this criticism, Michael reassured them. "Do not be afraid, I am perfectly serious. I am ready to make Basiliskianus Emperor."[226] To Basil this was a serious threat to his position. Again with the precision of a watchmaker, his diabolical mind prepared for the elimination of his former benefactor.[227] According to Symeon, Michael was warned of this plot by a monk while he was on a hunt.[228]

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[225] Ibid., 835_{16-19} (ἔφη δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς μεθ' ὅρκου πρὸς βασίλειον ὡς ὑπὲρ σὲ Ἰταλλιον αὐτῷ πρέπουσιν· μὴ γὰρ οὐκ ἔχω ἐξουσίαν, ὡς σὲ βασιλέα ἐποίησα, καὶ ἄλλον ποιῆσαι;..)

[226] Ibid., 835_{20}-836_{1} ("Τὸ τῆς βασιλείας ἀξίωμα, δέσποτα μου, μέγα ἐστί, καὶ ἀναξίως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐτιμήθημεν, καὶ οὐ δίκαιόν ἐστιν καταφρονεῖσθαι αὐτό.")

[227] [illegible] θέλω ποιῆσαι.")

[228] Ibid., 836_{4-8}.

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Convinced of a plot against his life, Michael decided to act but he moved too slowly.[229] On September 24, 867, Basil put into motion a plan that had little chance of failure. This date was selected to avoid suspicion, since Michael had invited Basil and Eudocia to dinner at St. Mamas. In and about the palace Basil had taken further steps to isolate Michael. Members of the guard were won over,[230] and Michael's Protovestarius, Rentiakes, was sent on a commission to kill some game.[231] This left only Michael, his chamberlain, and Basiliskianus in the palace. On the other hand, Basil had at his disposal eight accomplices who were ready to do his bidding. They were his brothers Marianus, Bardas, and Symbatius, his nephew Asylaeon, John Chaldus, Peter the Bulgarian, Constantine Toxaras, and the Persian Jakovitzes.[232]

During the dinner Michael drank heavily. To insure himself against any slipup, Basil excused himself and went to Michael's quarters. Here he tampered with the bolt on his door so that it could not be locked. Then he returned to the dining room, where Michael was now stupefied with wine. Basil conducted him to his room, and to allay any fears on the part of the emperor, kissed his hand on departing. Since Rentiakes was not present to sleep beside

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[229]The Vita Basilii, 249, mentions that an attempt was made on Basil's life on the hunt.

[230]Artavardus the Hetaeriarch was also party to the crime.

[231]Georgius Continuatus, 836_{9-11}.

[232]Ibid., 837_{5-14}.

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the emperor, Basiliskianus took his place.[233] This was exactly what Basil wanted; with one stone he could kill two birds. Basiliskianus sensed some danger when he could not bolt the door, but he could not warn the stupefied Michael. Suddenly the door opened and Basil and his eight associates entered the room. The Chamberlain, Ignatius, raised himself from bed to bar their entrance. Peter the Bulgarian, diving under Basil's arm, rushed to Michael's bed, but Ignatius grabbed him.[234] Another conspirator, the Persian Jakobitzes, stabbed Basiliskianus and hurled him to the floor.[235] In the struggle which followed, John Chaldus broke through to the emperor's bed and cut off both of Michael's hands (ἀπέκοψε τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ).[236] The conspirators then hesitated, deliberating whether they should kill Michael or not. Asylaeon, Basil's nephew, took the view that Michael should be killed immediately, and then entered the room where Michael lay, moaning and calling for mercy. Thus he plunged his sword into Michael's heart (τῆς καρδίας) and ripped open his bowels (τὰ ἔγκατα).[237]

After the murder, the conspirators rowed across the Golden Horn in a stormy night to the house of Eulogius, a Persian.[238] From his house they broke through an enclosure and reached the gate of the palace. Here Eulogius called

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[233] Ibid., 836_{20-22}.

[234] Ibid., 837_{5-8}.

[235] Ibid., 837_{9-11}.

[236] Ibid., 837_{9}.

[237] Ibid., 837_{15-22}.

[238] He was probably one of the guards who was won over by the conspirators.

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out to his countryman, Artavardus the Hetaeriarch, in his own tongue to open the door, for Michael had perished by the sword.[239] He immediately went to the Keeper of the Palace (πρὸς τὸν παπίαν) and took the keys from him and opened the gate. According to Symeon, the first thing Basil did was to pass the key to a new keeper, Gregory of Philemon.[240] The next morning, September 25, 867, Eudocia Ingerina was conducted in state from St. Mamas to the Great Palace, while Paul, a chamberlain, was sent to attend to details of burying Michael. He found the body wrapped up in a horsecloth with the Empress Theodora and her daughters weeping beside it. Michael was buried in a monastery at Chrysopolis.[241] In this heinous manner Basil the Armenian ascended the throne as sole Autocrat of the Romans.

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[239] Ibid., 838_{1-10}. [240] Ibid., 838_{10-13}.

[241] Ibid., 838_{14-22}. Eudocia Dekapolites, he says, was sent back to her parents unharmed.

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CHAPTER IV

THE EASTERN THEATRE: BASIL'S WARS WITH THE PAULICIANS

Little can be said to excuse Basil the First's rise to power despite the efforts of Constantine VII and his literary circle. It was a process motivated purely and simply by Basil's unscrupulous ambition, and it terminated in the atrocious murder of Michael III, his friend and benefactor. Up to this point Basil had displayed few talents other than his physical prowess and mastery of the machinations of Byzantine court intrigue. He would hardly have appeared to have been a prominent candidate to lead the Byzantine state toward a position of greatness. Nonetheless, as emperor, he proved to be both an energetic and an able sovereign who worked earnestly and untiringly in behalf of the empire. As portrayed by his grandson, he appeared as virtually a new Justinian. In some ways this image may have been part of the court propaganda to distract attention from his usurpation. On the whole, his drive and energy seem genuine, especially in his long and ceaseless struggle with the Arabs. It is here, above all, that his importance lies, for his foreign policy showed initiative and was, on the whole, successful. Nevertheless, one must realize that Basil should not be given unqualified credit in this regard, for the Amorian dynasty had done a great

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deal in this direction earlier. Where Basil must be given credit is in recognizing the importance of this policy and continuing it.

Initially he made some glaring mistakes. These errors, however, must be considered simply as misjudgments due to his inexperience which he swiftly rectified. It is perhaps beneficial to better understand this problem to give a brief historical description of the Eastern frontiers which Basil inherited from his Amorian predecessors.

The situation of the Byzantine Empire during the period of the early Amorian rulers was hardly satisfactory. During Michael II's reign (820-829), for example, the Arab world seriously took advantage of perplexities of the Byzantine Empire, which was rent by religious controversy[1] and civil war,[2] to seize the strategic island of Crete[3] and

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[1]On the religious controversy in the Amorian period, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 56-76, 110-19, 135-53; G. Ostrogorsky, Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Bilderstreites (Breslau, 1929); V. Grumel, "Recherches recéntes sur l'iconoclasme," Échos d'Orient, 29 (1930), 99ff.; E. J. Martin, A History of the Econoclastic Controversy (London, 1930); P. Alexander, "The Iconoclast Council of St. Sophia and Its Definition," D.O.P., 7 (1953), 35-66; M. V. Anastos, "Iconoclasm and Imperial Rule," in the new Cambridge Medieval History, IV (1966), 61-104.

[2]On the civil war of Thomas the Slav, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 84-100; J. B. Bury, "The Identity of Thomas the Slavonian," B.Z., 1 (1892), 55-60; P. Lemerle, "Thomas le Slave," Travaux et Mémoires (Paris, 1965), I, 254-97.

[3]On the fall of Crete, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 287-94; J. Papadapoulos, op. cit.; Ahrweiler, Byzance et la Mer, pp. 38-40; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 45-53; G. Wiet, L'Égypte de la conquête Arabe à la conquête ottomane (Cairo, 1932), pp. 71-72; Brooks, E.H.R., 28, 431-53; D. Zakythinos, "Saint Barbaros," Mélanges K. Amantos (Athens, 1960), pp. 446ff. The earlier works which are still useful are: J. A. Conde, History of the Dominion of the Arabs in

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to begin the conquest of Sicily.[4] From these vantage places the Arabs then descended upon the Adriatic possessions of the empire, bringing further destruction and territorial losses to the Byzantines.[5] These reverses made the later Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913-959) view this period as one in which the state had declined to the verge of total extinction.[6] Michael's son and successor, Theophilus, fared no better, for the iron-willed Caliph al-Mutasim (833-842) settled the internal disturbances of his state long enough to inflict further humiliation on the empire.[7] Unlike the border forays, followed by frequent exchanges of prisoners, which characterized the struggle during his predecessor's reign--i.e., al-Mamun (813-833)--Mutasim undertook a great expedition in 838 which was aimed at the empire's

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Spain, trans Foster (London, 1854), I, 263ff.; R. Dozy, Histoire des Musulmans d'Espagne, ed. E. Levi-Provencal (3 vols.; Leiden, 1932). Over the dating of the descent of the Arabs there is a greater controversy among scholars who place it between 823-828.

[4]On Sicily, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 294-308; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 73-94.

[5]See map in Ahrweiler, Byzance et la Mer, pp. 216-17.

[6]De administrando imperio, chap. xxix, 124$_{58-62}$: "But when the Roman Empire, through the sloth and inexperience of those who then governed it and especially in the time of Michael from Amorion, the Lisper, had declined to the verge of total extinction, the inhabitants of the cities of Dalmatia became independent."

[7]On this, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 260-72; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 144-77. Also see the route in J. B. Bury, "Mutasim's March through Cappadocia 838 A.D.," J.H.S., 29 (1909), 120-29.

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most important centers in Asia Minor.[8] A part of this expedition defeated Theophilus himself at Dazimon and occupied Ancyra, while Mutasim besieged and captured the city of Amorion from which the dynasty stemmed.[9] During the regency of Theodora (842-855) a new breed of men emerged who were instrumental in altering the traditional Byzantine policy of defense to one of offense against the Arabs on both land and see. Foremost among this new breed was Theoctistus, the Logothete of the Course, Theodora's chief minister.[10] Although he was at times unsuccessful on land, it was his policy which was responsible for a new spirit of enterprise and daring.[11] In 853, for example, the Byzantine navy even attacked the Egyptian stronghold of Damietta.[12] Under

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[8] On the expedition of al-Mutasim, see ibid.; Bury, E.R.E., pp. 259-72; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 144ff. On the condition of the Arab state, see W. Muir, The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall (Edinburgh, 1924), pp. 495-519; Hitti, op. cit., pp. 466-68.

[9] On the defeat of Theophilus, see the above works and also Genesius, 68; Michael the Syrian, Chronique, trans. J. B. Chabot (3 vols.; Paris, 1963), p. 95.

[10] On Theoctistus, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 154-61. A reinterpretation of this period has been done by Grégoire, Byzantion, 8, 515-50; Grégoire, Revue des études grecques, 46, 29-69.

[11] Georgius Continuatus, 815_{7-16}, for instance, records the defeat of Theoctistus in 844 on the Mauropotamus. For the identification of this place, see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 196 (n. 2). Contrary to Vasiliev's opinion is Bury, E.R.E., p. 274 (n. 4). Regardless of this defeat the Arabs could not prosecute the war successfully because of domestic problems. According to Grégoire, Byzantion, 8, 515-50, Theoctistus even recovered Crete for a short time. This, however, is rejected by many scholars.

[12] On the Damietta raid, see ibid.; Levi della Vida, Byzantion, 17, 212 Tabari records it also; see Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 315-16.

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Michael III's reign (855-867) even greater successes were achieved by the leadership of his uncles, Caesar Bardas and Petronas. As a matter of fact the years between 856 and 863 saw a glorious epoch of Byzantine military triumphs. On land Petronas inflicted a series of defeats on the Arab forces and even reached the Euphrates River in his campaigns.[13] The Emperor Michael himself campaigned successfully in the East as well.[14] However, the crowning achievement during this period were the victories of Petronas at Poson over al-Aqta, the Emir of Melitene, on September 3, 863, and then later in that same year over Ali ibn Yahya, the Governor of Armenia, at Mayyafariqin.[15] The results of these victories must have had a tremendous effect on Byzantine morale. What is more significant, the frontier was advanced eastward again.

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[13]On the early successes of Petronas, see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 226-40.

[14]The rehabilitation of Michael is due to Grégoire, Byzantion, 8, 515-50. See, also, the above works. His personal attention to the frontier is witnessed, furthermore, by inscriptions which have already been noted by Grégoire, Byzantion, 4, 437-68; Grégoire, ibid., 5, 327-46.

[15]His full name was Omar-ibn-abd-allah-al-Aqta. The battle is dated and mentioned by Tabari as in the month of Ramadan (October 18-November 16, 863). See Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 325; Bar Hebraeus, Chronographia, ed. and trans. E. A. W. Budge (2 vols.; London, 1932), I, 145, also mentions this under the year 869. See also Georgius Continuatus, 825; Theophanes Continuatus, 181-83.

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The determination of an exact frontier line between these two states is difficult to establish,[16] but some approximation may be arrived at by comparing the growth of the theme system in the Isaurian period to that of Amorian times.[17] In the eighth century, for instance, the following themes existed in Asia Minor: the Anatolikon, the Armeniakon, the Thracesion, the Opsikion, the Bukellarion, and the

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[16] On the frontier, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, E. Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches (Brussels, 1935), pp. 39-64 (hereafter cited as Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze); Bury, E.R.E., pp. 244-49; G. Le Strange, The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate (Cambridge, 1905) (hereafter cited as Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate.

[17] On the themes there are a considerable number of studies. Among the earlier studies are Gelzer, Die Genesis der byzantinischen Themenverfassung; C. Diehl, "L'origine du regime des themes dans l'empire byzantin," Études byzantines (1905), pp. 276-92; E. W. Brooks, "Arabic Lists of the Byzantine Themes," J.H.S., 21 (1901), 67-77; E. Stein, Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Reiches (Stuttgart, 1919); E. Stein, "Ein Kapitel vom persischen und vom byzantinischen Staat," B.Ng.Jb., 1 (1920), 50-89. More recent studies include: Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 43-92; E. Darko, "La militarizzazione dell'imperio bizantino," Studi bizantini e neoellenici, 5 (1939), 88-99; A. Pertusi (ed.), Costantino Porferogenito "De thematibus" (Rome, 1952), pp. 103-83 (hereafter cited as Pertusi, De thematibus; N. H. Baynes, "The Emperor Heraclius and the Military Theme System," E.H.R., 67 (1952), 308-81; G. Ostrogorsky, "Sur la date de la composition du livre des Thèmes et sur l'époque de la constitution des premieres Thèmes d'Asie Mineure," Byzantion, 23 (1953), 31-66; W. Ensslin, "Der Kaiser Herakleios und die Themenverfassung," B.Z., 46 (1953), 362-68; R. Guilland, "Études sur l'histoire administrative de l'empire byzantin," R.E.B., 15 (1957), 5-41; J. Karayannopulos, Die Entstehung der byzantinischen Themenordnung (Munich, 1959); P. Charanis, "Some Remarks on the Changes in Byzantium in the Seventh Century," in Mélanges G. Ostrogorsky, I (Belgrade, 1963), 71-76; W. E. Kaegi, "Some Reconsiderations on the Themes (7-9th Centuries), Byzantinoslavica, 16 (1967), 39-53.

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Cibyrraeot.[18] During the Amorian dynasty the Emperor Theophilis (829-842) created the new themes of Paphlagonia and Chaldia, perhaps to protect the northern part of his empire but also to prevent an Arab outlet to the sea.[19] In addition, new military and administrative units were created in the mountainous region of the Arab frontier. They were called kleisurae[20] and eventually evolved into new themes. The exact date when this transformation took place is a much debated problem; nevertheless, one can definitely say

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[18]There were five themes in 803 excluding the maritime theme; Theophanes Continuatus, 615 (Τῶν πέντε θεμάτων τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἀνατολήν ...). In 819 Theodore the Studite, Epistolae, ed. Migne, P.G. 99, p. 1284, confirms this. The maritime theme of the Carabesians was divided between 710-732 into the Cibyrraeot theme and the Drungariate of the Aegean Sea. This is first mentioned in Theophanes, 410. Crete, too, was a theme at least from the middle of the eighth century. See Vita Stephani, ed. Migne, P.G. 100, col. 1164.

[19]Taktikon Uspenski, pp. 111-13, mentions seven Asiatic themes including Paphlagonia and Chaldia. This is confirmed by the Acts of the Forty-two Martyrs of Amorium, ed. B. Vasilievsky and P. Nikitin in Memoires de l'Academie imp. de Saint-Petersbourg VIII^{e} serie, VII 2 (1905), p. 56; the Vita Theodorae, p. 9; and also by Ibn-al-Fakih in Brooks, J.H.S., 21, 73-76.

[20]The kleisurarchies of Charsianon and Seleucia at the beginning of Michael III's reign are shown by the Arab geographer, Ibn Khordadbeh, in ibid., p. 78. In the Taktikon Uspenski, p. 123, the kleisurai of Charsianon is mentioned. Ibn al-Fakih records Seleucia.

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that in Michael's reign Chaldia,[21] Koloneia,[22] Cappadocia,[23] and probably Charsianon were already part of the theme system.[24]

Under the Abbasid caliphs, it seems, the frontier line between the Byzantines and the Arabs was formed by the great mountain ranges of the Taurus and the Anti-Taurus. Here a long line of fortresses stretched on both sides from the Black Sea to Melitene (Malatiyah of the Arabs) on the Upper Euphrates River to Tarsus near the coast of the Mediterranean. Over the years many of these fortresses were taken and re-taken by Byzantines and Arabs as the war waxed and waned. These lines of fortresses can be divided into three basic groups: (1) those guarding the Pontic region and Armenia on the north;[25] (2) those guarding the heart of Asia Minor

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[21] Bury, E.R.E., p. 223, believed it was created as early as 837 A.D., for the Taktikon Uspenski, p. 119, mentions a Duke of Chaldia (ὁ δοὺξ Χαλδίας). See, also, Pertusi, De thematibus, pp. 137-38; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 53.

[22] Bury, E.R.E., p. 223 (n. 3), mentions that a Duke of Kaloneia is already mentioned in the Acts of the 42 Martyrs of Amorium. By 863, however, it was definitely a theme. See Theophanes Continuatus, 181_{12} (στρατηγοὺς τῶν Ἀρμενιακῶν καὶ Βουκελλαρίων καὶ Κολωνείας). For literature, see Pertusi, De thematibus, pp. 141-42.

[23] Cappadocia was also a theme by 863; Theophanes Continuatus, 181_{14} (Καππαδοκίας στρατηγούς). For literature, see Pertusi, De thematibus, pp. 120-22; Brooks, J.H.S., 21, 70.

[24] When Charsianon became a theme is not known. It is called a Kleisurai in 813 but it is a theme by 873; Genesius, 97_{12} (ἐν τῷ Χαρσιανοῦ Θέματι). For literature, see Pertusi, De thematibus, pp. 123-24. Seleucia still remained, as before, a Kleisurai.

[25] On this region, see Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 52-53; Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 317-30; Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, pp. 86-114.

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and Mesopotamia (Thughûr-al-Jazirah) to the northeast;[26] and (3) those guarding the southern part of Asia Minor and Syria (Thughûr-arh-Shâm) to the southwest.[27] In the northern sector the frontier defense was probably directed by the Byzantines from Aqrita or Iqrita (Aqritiya), the residence of the strategos of the Chaldion theme.[28] The easternmost frontier point here was probably the cities Sper Cisper (on the Čoroh) and Haltoyarič.[29] From here the frontier line ran in a southwesterly direction approximately along the upper reaches of the Halys where the defenses were directed by the Byzantines from Qalūniyat al-ʿAufi, the seat of the strategos of Koloneian theme.[30] In the central part the frontier line continued along the Halys. Here the defenses were directed by the Byzantines from Sebasteia and Caesareia Mazaka (Kaisariye), focal points for all the major roads converging from the west.[31] Opposite, on the Arab side,

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[26]Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 54-63; Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 270-330; Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, pp. 114-19.

[27]Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 80-92; Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 349-56.

[28]Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 53; E. W. Brooks, "Byzantines and Arabs in the Time of the Early Abbasids," E.H.R., 15 (1900), 728-47; ibid., 16 (1901), 84-92.

[29]Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 54.

[30]Ibid., p. 52. On the Koloneion theme, see Pertusi, De thematibus, pp. 37-39.

[31]J. G. C. Anderson, "The Road System of Eastern Asia Minor with the Evidence of Byzantine Campaigns," J.H.S., 17 (1897), 22-44. Hereafter cited as Anderson, "Road System."

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were the fortresses of Malatiyah (Melitine),[32] Zibatrah,[33] Hisn Mansûr (Perrhe),[34] Bahasnâ,[35] al-Hadath (Adata),[36] Marash (Germaniceia),[37] Al-Hârûnîyah,[38] Al-Kanîsah,[39] and

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[32]Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, p. 120, says it was the most important fortress of the Arabs. The city, he says, was built in 756 by order of the Caliph Manusr, who provided it with a mosque and a garrison of 4,000 men. Baladhuri states that its garrison held the bridge, three miles distant from the fort, where the high road crossed the Kubâkib River (Melas or Tukhmah Sû) near its junction with the Euphrates. On melitene, also see Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 70-71, 82-83, 275-78, 280-88, 309, 313; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 56-59, 62, 64-67, 70-76.

[33]For the location of Zibatrah, see J. G. C. Anderson, "The Campaign of Basil I against the Paulicians in 872 A.D.," Classical Review, 10 (1896), 136-40 (hereafter cited as Anderson, "Campaigns"); Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, p. 121 (n. 2); Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 42-43, 52, 58, 62, 73.

[34]Hisn Mansûr was called by the Byzantines Perrhe. Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, p. 123, says that it took its name from its builder, Mansur of the tribe of Kays, who was commander of this frontier station during the reign of the last Omayyad Caliph Marwan II, having been killed in 758. It was refortified by Harun ar Rashid during the caliphate of his father, Mahdi.

[35]Bahasnâ was also on the right bank of the Euphrates; ibid. According to him it stood on a hilltop, and Yakût said it had an impregnable castle. Also see Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 87.

[36]Al-Hadath was the Byzantine Adata and was captured in the reign of the Caliph Omar. See Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, pp. 121-22; Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 278; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 82, 96.

[37]Marash is the Byzantine Marasim and occupied the site of Germanicèia. Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, pp. 128-29, says it was rebuilt by Mu awiyah. It was refortified by Harun ar Rashid. See, also, Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 42-43, 52, 62-64, 67; Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 276.

[38]It lay in the hill country between Marash and Ayn Zarbah. Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, p. 129; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 43.

[39]It lay between Ayn Zarbah and Marash also. Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, p. 129; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 43.

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Ayn Zarbah (Anazarbus).[40] In the south, fortresses existed on both sides of the Taurus mountains from which innumerable raids were made by both sides.[41] To prctect Syria, the Arabs employed the following fortresses: Al-Massisah (Mopsuestia),[42] Adhanah (Adana),[43] and Tarsus.[44]

The vitality of the Abbasid Caliphate, however, was sapped in the course of the ninth century. One contributing factor was the various religious disputes which rent the state.[45] Perhaps even more ominous was the collapse of the political authority of the caliphate. While its sway once extended from the northern shores of Africa to the frontiers

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[40]Ayn Zarbah is Anazarbus. It was rebuilt and fortified by Harun ar Rashid. Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, p. 129; Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 291; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 43, 62-68.

[41]On the Taurus frontier, see ibid., pp. 80-92; Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 349-56.

[42]Al-Massisah was Mopsuestia. It lay on the Pyramus River (Wahr Jayhan). It was captured by Abd-Allah, son of the Omayyad Caliph Abd-al-Malik. See Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, pp. 130-31; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 40, 67-68; Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 207, 281.

[43]Adhanah was Adana. It lay on the east bank of the Sarus River (Nahr Sayhan) and was connected with a bridge. Yakût says it was defended by a wall with eight gates and a deep ditch. Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, p. 131; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 46, 82; Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 278, 281.

[44]Tarsus was probably one of the most important frontier fortresses, for it commanded the southern entrance of the Cilician gates. Ibn Hawkal states it was surrounded by a double stone wall and garrisoned by 100,000 horse-soldiers. See Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, pp. 132-34; Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 349-56; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 40, 43-44, 64, 67, 82-83, 87.

[45]On this, see T. W. Arnold, The Caliphate (Oxford, 1924); C. Brockelmann, History of the Islamic People (New York, 1960); Hitti, op. cit.

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of India, a gradual melting away of the provinces occurred. First Spain fell away to the Omayyads.[46] Next North Africa (756-800) under Ibrahim, the son of Aghlab, obtained its independence.[47] In 868 Ahmad ibn Tulun, a Turk who was sent from Baghdad to Egypt, made himself independent and extended his rule to Syria.[48] In the East a similar development took place except that it took a different form. Here Persian aristocrats with regional aspirations found an outlet in the establishment of local dynasties. In 820, for example, Tahir, al-Mamun's Persian general, became virtually independent in Khurasan and founded a dynasty.[49] This set a precedent for others who, while usually recognizing the suzerainty of the caliphs, usurped from them all effective authority and revenues.

While the power of the caliphs was gradually diminishing in the East and West, they were also losing their authority in Baghdad.[50] Here, al-Mamun's brother and

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[46]On the Omayyads in Spain, see R. Dozy, op. cit.; Hitti, op. cit., pp. 505-25; E. Levi-Provencal, Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane (3 vols.; Paris, 1950-1953); H. Terrasse, Islam d'Espagne (Paris, 1958).

[47]On the Aghlabids, see Hitti, op. cit., pp. 450-52; S. Lane-Poole, The Mohammadan Dynasties (London, 1894).

[48]On the Tulunids, see Hitti, op. cit., pp. 452-55, 548-52; Zaky Mohamed Hassan, Les Tulunides, Etudes de l'Egypte musulmane a la fin du IX siècle 868-905 (Paris, 1933).

[49]On the Tahirids, see Hitti, op. cit., p. 461; Muir, op. cit., pp. 502-04.

[50]G. Le Strange, Baghdad under the Abbasid Caliphate (London, 1900); Muir, op. cit., pp. 487-543; Hitti, op. cit., pp. 317-29.

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successor, al-Mutasim (833-842), made the fatal mistake of creating an army composed almost exclusively of Turkish mercenaries. Their influence in Baghdad soon grew to a point that it resembled the power which the Praetorian Guard exercised in imperial Rome. Life for the caliphs became almost intolerable, and they wought to escape by moving their capital to Samarra, on the Tigris north of Baghdad (836-898). Even here, however, the caliphs became virtual puppets of their own Turkish bodyguards, who made and unmade caliphs at will.[51] The Abbasid Caliphate was ruined by their recurring disorders and insurrections which naturally facilitated the growing separatism. The signs of this decline can be seen in the general weakness of Arab defenses in the East. Although raids and even an occasional expedition did occur, the offensive drive of Islam was gradually brought to a standstill in the East. Now Byzantine armies assumed the offense and sought out weak points along the frontier. This was especially true during the later, more energetic Amorian dynasty led by Michael III and Caesar Bardas.[52]

On the other hand, the newly emerging Arab separtist states in the West enjoyed a renewal of activity. Because of their vibrant leadership and the Byzantine concentration

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[51]Bury, E.R.E., pp. 232-86; Muir, op. cit., pp. 522-24; Hitti, op. cit., pp. 465-69; Brockelmann, History of the Islamic People, pp. 130-41.

[52]Grégoire, Byzantion, 8, 515-50; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 191-264.

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in the East, the empire suffered a series of setbacks in the West. To condemn the Byzantines, or more specifically the Amorians, for ignoring Western affairs is entirely ludicrous.[53] It must be kept in mind that Byzantine resources were limited. The Byzantines knew only too well that war on two fronts could seldom be carried on effectively.[54] Consequently the Amorians turned their attention to the most pressing problem of the day--the stabilization of the Eastern frontier, where their wealth and manpower reserves were situated. In dealing with their problems the Amorians were initially successful, and they deserve full credit.[55]

Basil's foreign policy in the East must be considered in the light of the above facts in order to fully comprehend the plans and the motives which led him initially to concentrate his attention offensively in the West, while pursuing

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[53]The first signs can be seen in the reorganization of the Western themes. In the Taktikon Uspenski, pp. 101-13, for example, there are references to the strategos of Cephallenia (ὁ πατρίκιος καὶ στρατηγὸς Κεφαλονίας) and Dyrrhachium. For literature, see Pertusi, De thematibus, pp. 174-76, 177-78, and the activity of the Byzantine fleet clearly illustrates this. (1) In 853 came the attack on Damietta in Egypt by 300 ships; (2) in 858 these two engagements between Arab and Byzantine fleets; (3) in 859 when Castrogiovanni fell, the Byzantines sent 300 ships to Sicilian waters. In an encounter they lost 100 ships; see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 173-74. In 866 the Byzantines planned a great expedition against Crete which unfortunately was scrapped after Caesar Bardas' murder.

[54]The failure of Justinian I (527-565), who fought not only against the Persians in the East but the Germanic successor states in the West, is a clear example.

[55]See Grégoire, Byzantion, 8, 515-50; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 191-264.

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a defensive policy in the East. It is clear that he took a broad view of the situation of the empire and the dangers which threatened it and that his approach was sound in principle. The danger from the Arabs in the West was more imminent, for they had established themselves in Sicily and Southern Italy and were then threatening Ragusa.[56] Such a threat to the security of the western portion of the Byzantine Empire could not be tolerated. It was of the utmost importance to the empire to maintain command of the Western Mediterranean and to confine Arab naval power. It was not just commerce and further territorial loss which were at stake; perhaps even more ominous was the danger of encirclement.[57]

Inexperience in foreign and military affairs, however, led Basil to err. Viewing the eastern frontier as secure, Basil decided to denude it of his troops and follow a defensive policy there like Justinian I. Perhaps he was led to his decision by an exaggerated conception of the success of

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[56]This problem will be dealt with later. The most recent study on Ragusa in the Middle Ages is by B. Krekić, Dubrovnik et le Levant au Moyen Âge (Paris, 1961).

[57]Constans II (641-668) pursued a similar offensive to halt the encirclement by the Arabs. On this, see J. B. Bury, "The Naval Policy of the Roman Empire in Relation to the Western Provinces from the 7th to the 9th Centuries," Centenario della nascita di Michele Amari (2 vols.; Palermo, 1910), II, 21-34 (hereafter cited as Bury, "Naval Policy"); J. B. Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire (London, 1889), II, 299-507; Ahrweiler, Byzance et la Mer, pp. 17-66.

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the Amorian offensive against the Eastern Arabs.[58] On the other hand, he knew how imminent the danger was from the Arabs in the West and decided on an all-out offensive to stop them there. As in the case of Justinian I, however, Basil's misjudgment became apparent almost immediately. This was principally due to the fact that the Paulician problem on the borders of the empire had not been solved.[59]

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[58]It must be remembered that Basil accompanied Michael III in 858-859 and knew something about the Byzantine successes then and later under Petronas.

[59]The literature on the Paulicians is considerable. Some of the older works which are still useful are: A. Lombard, Pauliciens, Bogomiles et Bonshommes (Geneva-Basle, 1879); I. von Döllinger, Bertrage zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters (Munich, 1890); K. Ter Mkrttschian, Die Paulikianer im byzantinischen Reiche (Leipzig, 1893); J. Friedrich, Bericht über die Paulikianer (Munich, 1897); F. C. Conybeare, The Key to Truth (Oxford, 1898); Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire, II; Bury, E.R.E.; Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby. More recent studies include H. Grégoire, "Les sources de l'histoire des Pauliciens," Academie Royale de Belgique, Bulletin de la classe des lettres et des sciences, morales, et politiques, 22 (1936), 95-114; H. Grégoire, "Autour des Pauliciens," Byzantion, 11 (1936), 610-14; H. Grégoire, "Precisions géographiques et chronologiques sur les Pauliciens," Academie Royale de Belgique, Bulletin de la classe des lettres et des sciences, morales, et politiques, 33 (1947), 281-324 (hereafter cited as Grégoire, "Precisions géographiques"); H. Grégoire, "Pour l'histoire des eglises pauliciennes," Orientalia Christiana Periodica, 13 (1947), 509-14; H. Grégoire, "Cathares d'Asie Mineure d'Italie et de France," in Mémorial L. Petit (1948), 142-51; S. Runciman, The Medieval Manichee (Cambridge, 1947); D. Obolensky, The Bogomils: A Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism (Cambridge, 1948); J. Scharf, "Zur Echtheitsfrage der Manichäerbücher des Photios," B.Z., 44 (1951), 487-94; F. Scheidweiler, "Paulikianer Probleme," B.Z., 43 (1950), 10-39, 366-84; E. Lipsic, "Paulician Movement in Byzantium in the Eighth and the First Half of the Ninth Centuries," V.V., 5 (1952), 49-72 (in Russian); E. Lipsic, "The Problems of the Paulician Movement in the Contemporary Bourgeois Literature," ibid., 235-44; M. Loos, "Le Mouvement Paulicien à Byzance," Byzantinoslavica, 24 (1963), 258-86; ibid., 25 (1964), 52-68; M. Loos, "Ou en est la question du mouvement Paulicien?", Izvestia na instituta za isteriia, 14-15 (1964), 357-71; M. Loos, "Gnosis und mittelalterlicher Daulisme," Listy

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A brief digression on this sect will illustrate this point. The Paulicians appeared for the first time in the seventh century in the wake of Moslem expansion. From all the evidence at hand, it was a religious movement to which many ethnic elements adhered, but it was dominated by Armenians. According to F. C. Conybeare and S. Runciman it was part of a general spiritual movement holding that the church was inadequate and in need of reform. This puritanical spirit took on many forms; in Armenia it appeared as a new and distinct sect known as the Paulicians, who strove for apostolic purity and simplicity.[60]

Recently, scholars of the Marxist school have rejected the belief in the basically religious aspect of this movement. E. Lipsic, for example, has argued that Paulicianism was a typical example of class conflict in the Byzantine state.[61] Although social and economic factors did undoubtedly

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Filologicke, 90 (1967), 116-27; M. Loos, "Certains aspects du Bogomilisme byzantin des 11e et 12e siècles," Byzantinoslavica, 28 (1967), 39-53. There is a recent study on this problem by Gerosian. This work, however, was unavailable to me.

[60]Conybeare, op. cit., p. lxxiv, says that they were the chief purveyors to the Greek world of Puritanism which essentially belonged to a race of vigorous mountaineers. Runciman, The Medieval Manichee, p. 32. Other heretical movements also existed in the seventh and eighth centuries. Among them are Iconoclasm, Montanism, Messalianism, and Athinganism. On the latter, see J. Starr, "The Heresy of the Athingani," Harvard Theological Review, 29 (1936), 93ff.

[61]An outspoken proponent of this school is Lipsic, V.V., 5, 49-72. She writes:

> "The development of the feudal systems, the oppression and enslavement of the peasantry created class struggle between the low class and the nobility. The Paulician movement was one of the forms of such a struggle. The

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play some role in this movement, as S. Runciman and H. Grégoire have stated, there is little evidence in our sources which would support the degree of exaggeration that those who have been schooled in Marxist methodology have adopted.[62] One factor which, I think, has been often overlooked is the cultural aspect of this movement. If one considers any of the heretical movements which had their roots in Asia Minor, there is a common factor which is immediately noticeable. They all, without exception, emerged and flourished in the mountainous regions of the empire or on its fringes; i.e., in areas which were not fully Hellenized. This is true of Adoptionism, Montanism, Messalianism, and Manichaeanism to mention but a few. As a matter of fact, in these regions there was an actual survival of earlier traditions and even languages. Although Hellenism did

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hatred toward the official clergy and especially toward monks and monasteries helped very much in the spread and popularity of Paulician anti-church and anti-monastery slogans among the masses of the population."
This article was read for me by J. Z. Horodysky, since I do not read Russian.

[62] On the sources of the Paulicians, see especially the articles of H. Grégoire cited before. According to him, The History of the Manichaeans by Peter the Sicilian (ed. Migne, P.G. 104 [Paris, 1860]) is authentic and genuine and should be treated as a prime source. On the other hand, Peter the Abbot's short account which is inserted to the beginning of Peter the Sicilian's work has been shown by Grégoire to be merely a careless epitome of the latter. A third source is that of George the Monk of which there are three versions. According to J. Friedrich and F. Scheidweiler, the short account is considered the original and is derived from Peter's work. A fourth source is the works of Photius which are much disputed. Grégoire considers the first book of Photius a forgery and regards only Book IV as from the hand of Photius. On the contrary, J. Scharf regards Books II and III as genuine, and he is of the opinion that there are traces of Photius' hand even in Book I.

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penetrate to a degree, adding to and further complicating the melange of traditional views and outlooks, often there was no rapport or communication between the Hellenized world and the rest of the remote and semi-Hellenized parts of the empire. This, in my opinion, was the greatest contributing factor toward heresy. In the case of Christianity, what emerged here was not the "Logos-Christianity" of the Hellenized world, but a form of Christianity which could and did fit into their cultural heritage. Paulicianism was one of many movements which emerged in a cultural melange where there was an intermixing of Hellenism and non-Hellenism.

The very existence of Paulicianism was a precarious one of alternate toleration and persecution. There is little that can be said with certainty about the early stages of its development. There is even some dispute over the date of its origin. D. Obolensky in his book, The Bogomils: A Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism, states that it spread over large areas of Armenia and Asia Minor in the second half of the seventh century.[63] On the other hand, S. Runciman dates the beginning of this movement with the coming of the eighth century.[64] According to Peter the Sicilian, a ninth-century source, the sect was founded in the reign of Constantine (Constans II, 641-668), the

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[63] Obolensky, op. cit., p. 28.

[64] Runciman, The Medieval Manichee, p. 31.

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grandson of Heraclius (610-641), by a certain Constantine (who took the name Silvanus)[65] from Mananalis in Armenia (ἐν κώμῃ Μαναναλεις λεγομενῃ).[66] Constantine apparently derived some of his ideas from a former Syrian captive called Diakonus whom he met and later accompanied to Arsamosata. When he returned to Mananalis he brought with him some books which Diakonus had given him and began his missionary activities.[67] Soon he gathered about himself a group of disciples, but left his home town for Kibossa, near Koloneia (Sabin, Kura Husai). Here he founded his church, which he called Macedonian[68] from a play of words found in the Book of the Apostles given to him by the

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[65]Peter the Sicilian, col. 1276, chap. xxiii (ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις κωνσταντίνου τοῦ βασιλέως τοῦ ἔθνους Ἡρακλείου, γέρων τις ἀρμένιος ὀνόματι κωνσταντῖνος.)

[66]Ibid. Mananalis is considered by both Conybeare, op. cit., pp. lxix, lxxiii, 136-39, and Runciman, The Medieval Manichee, p. 37, as on the eastern branch of the Euphrates, near the salt works at Kuminji. On its location, see, also, Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 64. It is 110 kilometers from Arsamosata, 62 kilometers to the east of Erzingian (Erzerum), and 140 kilometers to Koloneia. See, also, Grégoire, "Precisions géographiques," pp. 293-94 (n. 4).

[67]Peter the Sicilian, col. 1277 (ὁ δὲ αἰχμάλωτος ἐκ συρίας βίβλους ἐπιφερόμενος δύο, μίαν τοῦ ἁγίου εὐαγγελίου, καὶ ἑτέραν τὴν τοῦ ἀποστόλου,)

[68]Ibid., col. 1280 (τὴν Μαναναλιν καταλείψας ἐλθὼν κατῴκησεν εἰς κίβοσσαν τὸ καστρον πλησίον κολωνείας). This Koloneia is not Colonia-Archelios but in Armenia Minor. See Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 44, 52. See, also, Grégoire, "Precisions géographiques," pp. 294-95. The movement of the Paulicians from Armenia to Byzantine territory followed the persecution of this sect by the Armenian Catholicus Nerses III (641-661). Kibossa is a town near Koloneia, which lay east of Sebastia, on the Halys. See Conybeare, op. cit., p. lxxiii.

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aforesaid Diakonos: ὑμεῖς ἐστε οἱ Μακεδόνες, ἐγὼ δὲ εἰμι Σιλουανὸς ὁ ὑπὸ Παύλου ὑμῖν ἀποστελείς.[69] Although he apparently wrote no books, he worked for twenty-seven years as a self-proclaimed leader of this sect and spread his teachings throughout the western part of Asia Minor. Fearful of this movement's growth, the imperial government acted and brought about his death through the assistance of his own adopted son, Justus. However, the imperial official, Symeon, later called Tryphon, who master-minded this deed fell under the influence of this teaching even though he had returned to Constantinople. After three years of apparent contemplation, Symeon decided to step into the shoes of his victim.[70] For three years (692-695) he assumed the leadership of the sect which he had formerly persecuted. Eventually he and many of his followers were executed in the persecution ordered by Justinian II (785-795).[71]

Although many were killed in this critical persecution, two men, Gegnesius and Theodore, sons of Paul the Armenian,

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[69]Peter the Sicilian, col. 1280, chap. xxiv.

[70]Ibid., col. 1280, chap. xxv (Καὶ δὴ ἐν ὅλοις ἔτεσιν εἴκοσι καὶ ἑπτὰ διατρίψας ἐκεῖσε ... ἐλθὼν γὰρ ὁ Συμεὼν καὶ παραλαβὼν μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ τινα τῶν ἐκεῖσε ἀρχόντων τοὔνομα Τρύφωνα ... ἐπιταχθεὶς γὰρ παρὰ τοῦ βασιλικοῦ ὁ Ἰουστος καὶ δραξάμενος λίθου, ὡς νεόν Γολιάθ τοῦτον πατάξας ἀπέκτεινε.)

[71]Initially Symeon tried to convert the followers but joined them himself later; ibid., cols. 1280-81, chap. xxvi. According to Peter, col. 1282, chap. xxvii, they were all burned at the stake (πλησίον γὰρ τῆς σωροῦ πυρὰν μεγάλην ἀνάψαντες, ἅρδην κατέφλεξαν ἅπαντας.)

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escaped and took refuge at Episparis in Phanaroia where they re-established the Paulician community.[72] Here in their new homeland the Paulicians suffered from one of the many disputes which rent their sect. In this case the problem was one of succession between the two brothers, Gegnesius, now called Timothy, and Theodore. Eventually the former won.

An important development took place in the early years of Gegnesius' career, for a new attitude was taken by the imperial government toward the Paulician community. Apparently realizing the importance of this sect as a buffer against the Moslems, Leo III (717-741) invited Gegnesius to visit Constantinople. Perhaps the emperor wanted to know more about this sect because of their attitude toward icons, for a disputation took place between Gegnesius and the Patriarch.[73] What the outcome of this meeting was is not known for certain, but Gegnesius did return to Episparis under a safe conduct and his sect was not persecuted by Leo and his successors.[74] According to Peter the Sicilian, some time afterwards Gegnesius moved with his followers from

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[72] Ibid., cols. 1212-84. On the identification of the site, see Grégoire, "Precisions géographiques," pp. 29-46. He states that the exact site is mentioned by both Strabo (II. 73. XII. 517, 556, 559) and Pliny (H.N. VI. 10) as on the junction of the Iris and the Lycus.

[73] The date of his arrival is unknown. Grégoire believes it was 717; Runciman believes it was about 727.

[74] Runciman, The Medieval Manichee, p. 38, believes the move occurred under Paul, his father, because of a chronological gap which exists in the lists of the Paulician leaders.

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Episparis back to Mananalis again.[75] Here he guided his followers for thirty years.[76] Here the Paulicians fell under new persecution from the Armenian Catholicus, John of Otzun, who condemned them at the Synod of Dovin in 717 A.D.[77]

From the period of Gegnesius' death in 747 until the emergence of Sergius as their leader in 801, the Paulician community is known to have prospered and grown, for it was not persecuted by the imperial government. As a matter of fact Leo III and his son, Constantine V Copronymous (741-775), were not only sympathetic to this sect but acted as its protectors. The chronicler, George the Monk, for instance, even goes so far as to accuse Constantine of being a Paulician: "He is not a Christian (God forbid) but a Paulician; or to speak more truly and fittingly, an idolator, a worshipper of devils, and a devotee of human sacrifice."[78]

These years were not free of internal disputes. After the death of Gegnesius, for example, his disciples divided into two factions. One followed the leadership of his son Zacharias, while the other joined Joseph, called the Bastard (Ἰωσηθ τῷ Νόθῳ).[79] This struggle seriously weakened the

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[75]Peter the Sicilian, col. 1284 (ἦλθε πάλιν εἰς Ἐπίσπαριν

[76]Ibid., col. 1286, says he died of the bubonic plague after ruling thirty years (ὑπὸ τοῦ Βουβῶνος τὸν βίον κατέστρεψεν ἐν ὅλοις τριάκοντα ἔτεσι). The only evidence of a great plague was in the year 747; see Theophanes, pp. 422-24.

[77]The persecution is mentioned in the 32nd canon of the Council. It is given by Conybeare, op. cit., pp. 152-54.

[78]George the Monk, ed. Migne, P.G. 110,

[79]Peter the Sicilian, col. 1285.

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sect, for Zacharias lost out and many of his followers were destroyed by the Arabs.[80] Under Joseph's leadership the community again prospered, for it enjoyed the favor of Constantine V Copronymous (741-775). Nevertheless, many of the sect were transplanted from Germaniceia, Doliche, Melitene, and Theodosiopolis to Thrace by the emperor.[81]

Another blow to the community followed a dispute between Joseph and a powerful provincial leader, Krikosachis. As a result, a further splintering followed and Joseph, who now called himself Epaphrodites, founded a new church at Antioch in Pisidia.[82] Baanes his successor permitted even further deterioration,[83] which was not arrested until Sergius, called Tychikus, emerged.[84] Coming to Tabias near Annia, Sergius was determined to reunite the sect through reform and challenged Baanes first of all.[85] "From East to West, from North to South, he travelled and preached the

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[80] Ibid., col. 1285, chap. xxx.

[81] Theophanes, 429$_{19-22}$ (ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς Κωνσταντῖνος εὐρούς τε καὶ ἀρμενιούς, οὓς ἤγαγεν ἀπὸ Θεοδοσιουπόλεως καὶ Μελιτηνῆς, εἰς τὴν Θρᾴκην μετῴκισεν, ἐξ ὧν καὶ ἐπλατύνθη ἡ αἵρεσις τῶν Παυλικιάνων)

[82] Peter the Sicilian, col. 1285, chap. xxxi (καὶ ἀπελθὼν κατῴκησεν εἰς ἀντιόχειαν τῆς Πισιδίας He died at a place called Χαρτοκοπεῖον (col. 1288).

[83] Ibid., col. 1288, chap. xxxi.

[84] Ibid., col. 1288, chap. xxxii (ἐκ τῶν μερῶν Ταβίας τῆς πόλεως... Σέργιον τὸν ἑαυτὸν παράκλητον λέγοντα, Τυχικόν τε ἑαυτὸν καλέσαντα.)

[85] Ibid., cols. 1288-89, chap. xxxiii.

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Gospel," says Peter the Sicilian. In this way he reinvigorated the community.[86] As a result of his endeavors, Peter the Sicilian records that at the beginning of the ninth century Paulician influence was found along the entire eastern frontier in such places as Mananalis, Kibossa, Episparis, Antioch in Pisidia, Khartakopeon, Tabias, Annia, and Erzerum.[87] In addition, their influence can also be seen at Tephrike, Argaus, Amara, Mopsuestia, and Samosata (from Arab and Byzantine sources).[88]

The ninth century saw a change in imperial policy toward the Paulician community. Nicephorus I (802-811) was the last to favor them.[89] With Michael I (811-813) a new period of persecution began which was instrumental in driving the Paulicians to seek shelter under the Moslems.[90] According to our sources, Michael entrusted the persecution of this sect in Phrygia and Lycaonia to Leo the Armenian, then strategos of the Anatolikon theme.[91] The suppression of the Paulicians in Cappadocia and Pontus was entrusted to

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[86] Ibid., col. 1293, chap. xxxvi (Ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ μέχρι δυσμῶν καὶ Βορρᾶ καὶ νότου, ἔδραμον κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ...)

[87] Ibid., col. 1297, chap. xxxviii; the enumeration is found here.

[88] Will be discussed more fully later.

[89] Theophanes, 488_{22}.

[90] Peter the Sicilian, cols. 1300-01, chap. xli.

[91] Theophanes, p. 495; Peter the Sicilian, col. 1301.

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the Exarch of the patriarchal monasteries and to the Bishop of Neo-Caesarea, Thomas.[92]

When Thomas the Slav revolted against the Emperor Michael II, many Paulicians joined forces against the empire.[93] Perhaps they hoped through their assistance to Thomas the Slav to regain the protection which they had formerly enjoyed under the Isaurian emperors, Leo II and Constantine V. When Thomas failed, however, the imperial government took an even more hostile attitude toward the Paulicians. Even Theophilus (829-842), who was an iconoclast, pursued this course.[94] To add to their problems, the Paulicians also lost their able leader at this time (Sergius was killed by a certain Tzanion of Nicepolis).[95]

It was during the regency of Theodora (842-855) that the most severe persecution of the Paulicians took place. Taking an uncompromising stand, the imperial government under her leadership prepared either to convert or to

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[92] Ibid., col. 1301 (Ἦλθεν οὖν τὸ πρόσταγμα τοῦ βασιλέως, καὶ εἰς ἀρμενιακοὺς πρὸς θωμᾶν, τὸν ἐπιόκοπον Νεοκαισαρείας, καὶ τὸν παρακοιμώμενον ἔξαρχον ὄντα)

[93] Genesius, 33.

[94] See Bury, E.R.E., p. 277; Runciman, The Medieval Manichee, p. 40; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 230. Source is Vita Macarii, ed. H. Delehaye, Analecta Bollandiana, 16 (1897), 142-63.

[95] Peter the Sicilian, col. 1301 (γὰρ Τζανιὼν ὁ ἀπὸ καστέλλου τῆς Νικοπόλεως ὢν). A college of his disciples ruled after him. Among them were Michael (called Kankaris), John the Invisible, Theodatos, Basil, and Zosimus.

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exterminate the sect by sending an expedition led by Leo, the son of Arygrus, Andronicus, the son of Doukas, and Soudalis.[96] In the merciless persecution which followed many were hanged, drowned, and cut down by the imperial forces.[97]

The insecurity of their existence more than any other factor drove the Paulicians to seek refuge among the Arabs.[98] Among them was one of their most outstanding leaders, Carbeas.[99] According to the Continuator of Theophanes, he was formerly a Protomandator in the service of the strategos of the Anatolikon theme, Theodotus Melissenus.[100] When he learned that his father had been executed for his Paulician beliefs, he fled with 5,000 of his sect to Melitene. Here

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[96]Theophanes Continuatus, 165-67. He says: ἡ μὲν γὰρ πέμψασά τινας τῶν ἐπ' ἐξουσίας (ὁ τοῦ Ἀργυροῦ καὶ ὁ τοῦ Δουκὸς καὶ ὁ Σουδάλης οἱ ἀποσταλέντες ἐλέγοντο) τοὺς μὲν ξύλῳ ἀνήρτων....)

[97]Ibid., p. 165. He exaggerates the number as 100,000 (ὡσεὶ δέκα μυριάδες ὁ οὕτως ἀπολλύμενος ἠριθμεῖτο λαός.)

[98]Peter the Sicilian, col. 1301, mentions already the flight to the Emir of Melitene, whom he calls or Emir al-Aqta.

[99]Ibid., cols. 1301-04, chap. ccxii.

[100]Theophanes Continuatus, 165-66 (ὑπῆρχεν οὖν τῷ στρατηγῷ τῶν ἀνατολικῶν (Θεόδοτος οὗτος ἦν ὁ κατὰ τὸν Μελισσηνὸν ἀνήρ τις εἰς τὴν ὑπηρεσίαν καταριθμούμενος, καρβέας ὀνόματι, τὴν τοῦ πρωτομανδάτωρος....) Although this is recorded under Theodora's regency, it probably occurred earlier under Theophilus, for Carbeas is already mentioned by the Acts of the Forty-two Martyrs of Amorium (dated 845-846), p. 29.

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the Emir, Omar-ibn-abd-allah-al-Aqta, not only received him happily but furnished his followers with land.[101]

In their new haven, the Paulicians built for themselves at first two towns, Argaus and Amara.[102] Soon the influx of more of their co-religionists led them to establish yet another town called Tephrike, which eventually became their capital.[103]

With the flight of the Paulicians to the shelter of Arab protection, a new phase in their history opens. Where they formerly acted as a buffer state for the Byzantines against the Moslems as the Mardaites did earlier, they now actively cooperated with the Arab emirs of Melitene and Tarsus, at this time al-Aqta and ali-ibn-Yaha-al-Armeni respectively, in frequent forays into Byzantine territory.[104] As the raids threatened the very existence of the empire, the imperial government decided to take countermeasures. During the reign of Michael III (855-867) the able general Petronas, the brother of Caesar Bardas and then strategos

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[101] Theophanes Continuatus, 166_{5-8} (φυγὰς μετὰ καὶ ἑτέρων πέντε χιλιάδων τῆς τοιαύτης κεκοινωνηκότων αἱρέσεως πρὸς τὸν τῆς Μελιτινῆς ταυικαῦτα κατάρχοντα ἡμέρα γίνεται.). The complete name of the Emir of Melitene is given by Tabari; see Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 318-19.

[102] On the sites, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 342.

[103] On Tephrike, see G. Le Strange, "Al-Abriq, Tephrike the Capital of the Paulicians: A Correction Corrected," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1896), pp. 733-36; Anderson, "Road System," pp. 27, 32.

[104] Tabari; see Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 318-19. The expedition is also recorded by Theophanes Continuatus, 166_{17}.

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of the Thracesion theme, was entrusted with the task of dealing with them.[105] In 856 after the withdrawal of the Emir of Melitene, who made his usual raid, Petronas counter-attacked in the region of Arsamosata and then advanced to the region of Amida. From here he turned northwestward toward Tephrike where he destroyed many villagers and took 10,000 prisoners. On his return he added a further feather to his cap by eluding both al-Aqta, the Emir of Melitene, and Carbeas.[106] in the year 859, the Emperor Michael and Caesar Bardas campaigned successfully in the region of Samosata, killing and capturing about 500 Arabs.[107]

The Arabs and their Paulician allies also had some successes. In the following year, al-Aqta captured 7,000 prisoners in a raid, while Carbeas took 5,000 and al-Armani took 5,000 prisoners and 10,000 horses, cattle, and donkeys.[108]

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[105] Ibid., 167_{4-10}. He was the strategos (στρατηγὸν ὄντα τῶν θρακησίων). The continuator, however, did not record the results of this expedition, perhaps because of his hostility to Michael. As a result, Runciman records this expedition as a failure. On the contrary, he was a success, for Tabarī mentions it; see Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 318-90.

[106] Ibid., pp. 318-19.

[107] Genesius, 91; Theophanes Continuatus, 176-77; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 161-62, record the disaster of Michael. Tabarī (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 319), however, records the success of the expedition by Michael. There are also five inscriptions which record Michael's activities in the East. One at Ancyra even gives the precise date of June 10, 859. See Grégoire, Byzantion, 4, 437-49; Grégoire, ibid., 5, 327-28. Carbeas' presence is mentioned at Samosata.

[108] Tabarī; see Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 320. He also records that a naval expedition was undertaken by Fadl-ibn-Qarin with twenty ships against Attilia, a Byzantine fortress on the southern coast of Asia Minor.

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This, nevertheless, was the last great campaign for Carbeas for he was killed in 863, probably at Poson by Petronas.[109] Although the loss of Carbeas seemed unsurmountable, an equally capable leader emerged in his nephew John Chrysocheir. Like Carbeas, Chrysocheir began his career in the imperial service and held the rank of Spatharius.[110] Even then he must have had some Paulician leanings which were known, since the Patriarch Photius himself endeavored to strengthen his faith in orthodoxy.[111] Photius' efforts proved, in the end, fruitless; he later joined Carbeas and married his daughter.[112] His abilities were immediately recognized and he was designated by Carbeas as his heir-to-be.

Several years must have elapsed between the time of Carbeas' death and the reorganization of the Paulician forces under Chrysocheir. Perhaps, as in the case of the Arabs, this was due to severe losses which they suffered at the hands of the Byzantine forces led by Petronas. This can surely be the only reason why a rare peace existed on the

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[109] He died in 249 A.D. (February 24, 863-February 12, 864). See Mas'ūdī, Prairies d'or, VIII, 75. The defeat of the Emir of Melitene at Poson is described by Tabarī; see Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 325. See, also, Theophanes Continuatus, 180-84; Genesius, 95-97.

[110] Photius, Epistolae, letters 9, 19, 26; pp. 933, 941, 945. The first is to John Chrysocheir, Spatharius, and here (Ἰωάννῃ σπαθαρίῳ τῷ χρυσοχέρῃ), Photius tries to strengthen his faith. In letter 19, he (Photius) warns him that there are suspicions about his orthodoxy; and letter 26 denounces him as an apostate.

[111] Ibid., letter 9, p. 333.

[112] Peter the Sicilian, col. 1304, chap. xliii (Χρυσοχέρις ὁ ἀνεψιὸς καὶ γαμβρὸς αὐτοῦ.)

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eastern frontier at the time of Basil's accession to the throne.[113] This false security more than anything else led Basil to pursue a policy which in principle was sound but almost led to serious disasters. As if following in the footsteps of Justinian I, Basil decided to pursue a purely defensive policy in the Balkans and the East, while he initiated an all-out offensive against the Arabs in the West, to prevent encirclement there. A western-oriented policy, however, incurred one major difficulty. There had to be a removal of troops vital to the defense of the eastern frontier to the western theater because of the limited resources of the empire. When Chrysocheir learned of this he immediately took action without any assistance from his still recuperating Arab allies.[114] From the first, Chrysocheir not only harassed the Byzantine borders but also made several penetrating raids deep into imperial territory. One of these raids brought him to Nicomedia and Nicaea, on the shores of the Propontis.[115] Another led him through the Thracesion theme to the city of Ephesus on the

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[113]Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 5-96, is still a starting point for all research on this subject.

[114]For sources on the Paulician wars of Basil, there is first the Vita Basilii, 266_{37}-277_{43} (this is the longest account); Genesius, 121-25.

[115]Ibid., 121_{16-18} (οὗτος γὰρ ὁ ἀλαγὼν σὺν καρβαίᾳ καὶ καλλίστῳ πλείστα κατὰ χριστιανοὺς τεκταινάμενος, ὡς καὶ ὁ τούτου πατήρ, μέχρι Νικομηδείας καὶ Νικαίας αὐτῆς διελθών)

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Aegean.[116] Here, on a hill in the region where the temple of Artemis once stood, was the great church of St. John Theologus. Even this sacred sanctuary did not escape the wrath of the Paulicians, for Chrysocheir used it to shelter his horses and baggage.[117] This ability of the Paulicians to penetrate into Byzantine territory strikingly reveals to what extent Basil had denuded Asia Minor of its defenses.

Faced with these precarious circumstances in the East, Basil had three alternatives which he could follow. One, he could recall all of his forces from the West and scrap his western offensives entirely. Two, he could stall for time in the East by pretending to negotiate with Chrysocheir until he could strike effectively in the East. Three, he could try to rectify through diplomacy the mistakes of Byzantine foreign policy toward the Paulicians and perhaps win them back to the imperial fold. From all indications, Basil rejected the first choice for two reasons. One, Basil, I think, seriously feared the possibility of Arab

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[116] Ibid., 121_{19} (ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ εἰς τὸ τῶν Θρακησίων θέμα διαβραμών.). Both of these attacks are not mentioned by Constantine, perhaps because they were a little bit too embarrassing.

[117] Ibid., 121_{19-22} (μέχρις Ἰωάννου τοῦ Θεολόγου τῆς ἐπαρχίας καταντήσεν, οὗτινος τῷ ναῷ οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ ἐντυχόντες εἰσήγαγον τά τε ἄλογα αὐτῶν, καὶ λοιπὴν ἀποσκευὴν δυσμενῶς ἐνυβρίζοντες). On the location of this region, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 109-10. On the church, see Theophanes, 469_{30}. The date of these expeditions must have occurred in 868-869. The route of Chrysocheir was probably along the Byzantine road which led from Arabissos, past Mt. Argaeus to Laodiceia and Philomelon and then following the Roman roads along the Maeander River to Ephesus. See map in Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 23.

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encirclement and two, he had before him a vision of emulating great leaders, perhaps even Justinian I himself.[118] He could not have viewed seriously his second choice, either, for he had no way of knowing how long he would have to commit himself in the West. Basil, therefore, had but one course to follow and he prudently pursued it.

In 869[119] he sent Peter the Sicilian as his ambassador to negotiate a peace with Chrysocheir and to exchange prisoners, which may have been considerable in number.[120] Arriving at Tephrike, Peter brought with him the usual articles of diplomacy: gifts of gold, silver, and perhaps some silk goods.[121] The most important aspect of this diplomatic

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[118]There is a remarkable parallel between Basil and Justinian I. For instance, this can be seen in his foreign policy and in his attempts at being a great law-giver, builder, and protector of orthodoxy.

[119]The year must be 869 because of the following reasons: (1) Peter the Sicilian, col. 1304, says that it occurred in the second year of Basil's reign (ὅπερ γέγονεν ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ ἔτει τῆς βασιλείας βασιλείου). The mission lasted nine months (ἐκείσε σὺν ἐννεαμηνιαίου χρόνου διατρίψαντες). (2) Genesius records that the war ended two years after the negotiations had failed. (3) Tabari (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 6) states that Chrysocheir died in 872.

[120]Peter the Sicilian, col. 1241 (ἡ δὲ δουλεία ἡμῶν, αἰχμαλώτων ἦν ὑπαλλαγή, ἥτις καὶ καλῶς γεγένηται ἐν τῇ γῇ καὶ χαρᾷ τῆς ἁγίας βασιλείας αὐτῶν); col. 1304 (παρεβάλομεν ἡμεῖς ἐν τῇ Τιβρικῇ ἀποσταλέντες ἐκεῖσε δουλείας βασιλικῆς ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὑπαλλάξαι ἄρχοντας αἰχμαλώτους. Genesius, 121_{22-23}, does not mention Peter's name but also mentions the negotiations (πρὸς οὖν τὸν χρυσόχειρα γράφει ὁ βασιλεὺς εἰρήνην συνθέσθαι)

[121]Ibid., 122_{4-5}, relates that gold, silver, and garments were to be given in exchange for the prisoners (εἰληθέναι τε παρ' αὐτοῦ χρυσόν τε καὶ ἄργυρον καὶ ἐσθῆτας, καὶ αἰχμαλωτίζειν καὶ καταστρέφειν χριστιανούς ἀνακόψαι). Perhaps among these garments were silk goods,

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mission was the great wealth of information which Peter obtained and preserved for posterity.[122] Diplomatically he failed to achieve any results in establishing a permanent peace. Perhaps the Paulicians had suffered too many times to consider this a serious gesture. In any case, Chrysocheir viewed this gesture on the part of Basil as a sign of weakness. Despondently, Peter returned to Constantinople after nine fruitless months.[123] He brought with him the alarming report that Chrysocheir was in touch with his co-religionists in Thrace together with this insolent message:[124] "If indeed, O Emperor, you desire to accomplish peace with me, then abdicate your authority in the East and rule in the West,"

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which were often used as an article of diplomacy. On this, see R. S. Lopez, "The Silk Industry in the Byzantine Empire," Speculum, 28 (1945), 1-42. On Tephrike, see W. Tomaschek, Historisch-Topographisches vom oberen Euphrat und aus Ord-Kappadakien (Berlin, 1898). Conybeare, op. cit., p. xxiv, says it was on a site some seventy-five miles southeast of Sevar on the river Chalta which, rising on the south side of Mt. Argaeus, flows due east to join the northern Euphrates fifteen to twenty miles north of Egen; Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 265, 267; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 55-56, 60, 74 (n. 4).

[122]On this point, see the article of H. Gregoire which I cited earlier. Earlier studies had their doubts about his validity. See, for example, Ter Mkrttschian, op. cit. He felt that Peter the Abbot's was the oldest source. J. Friedrich, "Der ursprungliche bei Georgios Monachos nur Theilweise Bericht über die Paulikianer," Sitzungsberichte der philos.-philol. und hist. Classe der k. bayer. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München (1896), pp. 68, 101-02, also denies the validity of Peter the Sicilian's account.

[123]Peter the Sicilian, col. 1304.

[124]Ibid. Friedrich denies the possibility of these relations, but both Grégoire and Runciman accept it. So did Conybeare earlier: "It is certain that in a large measure they succeeded in their object, and the result was the movement of the Bogomiles."

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and "If you do not, we shall all together hasten in order to banish you from your Empire.[125]

Affronted by this obstinate message, Basil immediately decided to take steps to eradicate the Paulician menace once and for all. He had been active in the regions along the Adriatic, but once Ragusa was safe he probably began recalling some of his troops in order to attack the Paulicians. In many ways the time was auspicious, for the Abbasids could give little assistance to their former allies. In the spring of 870 Basil himself set out with his forces.[126] Impatient, he was determined to strike hard and fast at the very heart of Paulicianism, its capital Tephrike. Setting out from Nicaea, he probably followed the major military road to Dorylaeon. Thence eastward, he continued through Basilika, thence to the terminus of the road at Sabasteia on the Halys River.[127]

Since Sebasteia was one of the major focal points where the routes from the west converged, the Byzantine forces of Basil probably assembled there before advancing to Tephrike. The actual route followed to the Paulician

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[125] Genesius, 122_{8-11} (εἴπερ ἐθέλοις, ὦ βασιλεῦ, μεθ' ἡμῶν εἰρήνην ἐπιτελέσαι, ἀποστηθι τῆς κατ' ἀνατολὴν ἐξουσίας σου, τῆς δὲ πρὸς δύσιν ἀντέχου, καὶ εἰρηνεύσομεν μεθὰ σοῦ. εἰ δὲ μή, σπεύσομεν ὅλως ἵνα σε καὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἐξοστρακίσωμεν.)

[126] Vita Basilii, 266_{13-20}.

[127] On the road system of the Byzantines, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 74-82, 197-221; Anderson, "Road System," pp. 22-44.

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capital is unknown. Probably the road which was almost in a straight line sixty-five miles to the southeast was taken.[128] On the other hand, the army could follow the longer route first to Euspoena and then to Tephrike.[129] In the face of a Byzantine invading force, Chrysocheir's strategy was simply to fall back to his capital and allow Basil and his forces to destroy everything in their advance. Thus unhindered, the imperial forces arrived at Tephrike, which they proceeded to reconnoiter. In the course of this operation, Chrysocheir sallied out of the fortress and inflicted an initial defeat on the imperial forces.[130] Basil himself would have been captured except that he was saved through the bravery of a fellow Armenian, Theophylact Abastaktos, the father of the future emperor, Romanus Lacepanos.[131] This defeat and Basil's subsequent retreat clearly indicate that the imperial forces could not have had an overwhelming superiority over the Paulicians. Perhaps all of the reinforcements from the West had not yet arrived.[132] The

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[128]This road is mentioned by Anderson, ibid., p. 32.

[129]Since no specific route is mentioned in our sources, he may also have taken the road from Sebasteia to Euspoena and then proceeded to Tephrike.

[130]Georgius Continuatus, 841_{10-11}; Pseudo-Symeon, 690_{6-13}. The Vita Basilii, 267, tones down the defeat but says he retreated from Tephrike. Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 206.

[131]Georgius Continuatus, 841_{11-14} (ἐν δὲ τῇ τοιαύτῃ φυγῇ τοῦ βασιλέως Θεοφύλακτος ὁ Ἀβαστάκτος, ὁ πατὴρ Ῥωμανοῦ...)

[132]See, below, the activities of Basil's forces in the West. I believe only the imperial forces--i.e., the Tagmata--participated in this campaign, perhaps assisted by some thematic forces. On the subject of the Tagmata, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 47-67.

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setback gives Basil's expedition an ineffectual appearance at first, but in his subsequent moves he displayed sound judgment. Realizing that Tephrike could continuously be supplied by its adjacent co-religionists, Basil ordered the subjugation of the nearby fortresses. This reduced the effectiveness of the Paulician capital and at the same time prevented an influx of reinforcements and aid. Before Basil returned to the capital at the end of the campaigning season, he had obtained at least a partial success in this direction. For among the fortresses that the imperial forces captured were Abara, Spathe, and Koptos.[133]

In an attempt to break the encircling tactics of the imperial forces, Chrysocheir prepared a series of diversions designed to evade the stranglehold which the Byzantines were preparing for him. In the spring of 871 A.D. he therefore advanced as far as Ancyra, which he besieged. Then he followed up by ravaging the district of Kommata.[134] When Basil heard of these activities, he decided to deliver a new offense against Tephrike. This time the command of the army was given to his son-in-law, Christopher, the Domestic of

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[133]The Vita Basilii, 267_{16}, mentions only two specially (τὴν ἄβαραν καὶ τὴν Σπάθην καὶ ἑτέρα τινα ἐκπορθήσας). Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 207_{1}, adds the other (τὴν ἄβαραν, τὸν Κόπτον, τὴν Σπάθην, καὶ ἄλλα πολλά.)

[134]Genesius, 122_{14-16}. (Δυσὶ δὲ χρόνοις παρελκυσθείσαν ὁ Χρυσόχειρ ἐξῆλθε σὺν τοῖς ἰδίοις στρατεύμασι μέχρις ἀγκύρας τῆς πόλεως καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν Κομμάτων.)

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the Schools.[135] Leading an imperial army which was augmented by thematic troops from the Armeniakon and Charsianon themes, Christopher marched directly against Tephrike, perhaps by the same route which Basil had taken in 870 A.D.[136] This time the overwhelming superiority of the Byzantine forces won the day and the capital of the Paulician state, Tephrike, was captured and razed to the ground.[137]

The fall of Tephrike marked the end of Paulician resistance, even though their leader, Chrysocheir, made his escape. Now, one by one, the Paulician strongholds which extended throughout the highlands from Tephrike to the south as far as the Tokhma-Su (ancient Melas, the Arabic Kubakib) surrendered and joined the Byzantine forces.[138] The first to do this was the important Paulician stronghold of Taranta

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[135]The name of the Domestic of the Schools is given by Symeon only; Georgius Continuatus, 841_{17-18} (ὑποστρέψας δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐν τῇ πόλει ἀπέστειλε χριστοφόρον γαμβρὸν αὐτὸν ἐν τεφρικῇ). It is repeated by Pseudo-Symeon, 690_{11-72}; the Vita Basilii, 272_{12} (σὺ τῶν σχολῶν ἐξηγούμενος); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 210_3 (ὁ δομέστικος τῶν σχολῶν); and Genesius, 122_{17} (ὁ δὲ καθηγεμὼν τῶν σχολῶν). All refer to him as merely the leader of the schools.

[136]The presence of the Thematic Corps of Armenikon and Charsianon themes is mentioned by Genesius, 122_{21-22}; Vita Basilii, 272_{12-13} (τὸν τε τοῦ χαρσιανοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀρμενίων); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 210_4 (τὸν τε τοῦ χαρσιανοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀρμενιακῶν). According to De Ceremoniis, I, 444, there were specific stations where troops from the surrounding country would concentrate and await the emperor's arrival. One of these was at Sebasteia-Caesarea, where troops from the Armeniakon waited (ὁ δὲ ἀρμενιακὸς καὶ ὁ ἐξ Βασταλείας εἰς Καισάρειαν). On the subject, see, also, Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 201-21.

[137]Georgius Continuatus, 841_{19-20}.

[138]Conybeare, op. cit., pp. lxxii-lxxvi.

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(Dalanda, modern Derende).[139] When it heard of the fall of Tephrike, the city immediately sent envoys to sue for peace and permission to be entered among the allies of the Byzantines.[140] The submission of Taranta created a chain reaction, for several other fortresses surrendered including Lokana, held by an Armenian, Kouitikius.[141]

The surrender of these fortresses placed the Byzantine forces in an excellent position to launch an attack on Melitene. The elusive Chrysocheir still remained to be dealt with. Like Spitamenes, Alexander's foe in Sogdiana, Chrysocheir possessed the mystique and ability which made him a dangerous enemy in this type of warfare. Such a person could not be permitted to remain at large, for there was a good chance that he might regroup his forces in the mountainous terrain.

Employing tactics suitable in this terrain, where guerrilla warfare was dangerous, Christopher pursued Chrysocheir with due caution. In order to conceal his

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[139] Taranta (ἡ Ταράντα λεγόυσι); Vita Basilii, 260_{20}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 207_{6-7} (ὁ Ταυρος). On the location of Taranta, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 309. He says it is the modern Rarande, which is not far east of Bouraina. The latter is on the Tokhma-Su, near Melitene on the road from Sebasteia to Arabissos. See, also, Anderson, "Campaigns," p. 137.

[140] Vita Basilii, 267_{20-21} (ἡ Ταράντα λέγουσι πρέσβεις πεμψασα εἰρήνης τύχειν καὶ τῆς συμμαχίσιν ἐγγράφεσθαι); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 207_{6-7}.

[141] Vita Basilii, 268_{4} (κουρτικιός τις ἀρμένιος); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 207_{10} (κουρτικιός, γένος ὢν ἀρμένιος). On the location of the site, see Anderson, "Campaigns," p. 137; Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 342.

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movements, he kept a day's march from Chrysocheir's rear.[142] Thus when Chrysocheir encamped at Agrane[143] in the Charsianon theme, the imperial forces were not far away at Siborn.[144] Knowing that Chrysocheir was a cunning foe and a master of diversive tactics, Christopher took the following step to anticipate his foe's movements and to set his final trap. The imperial forces were divided into two parts; the strategoi of the Charsianon and Armeniakon themes were ordered to take some of their subordinate officers and a few good horsemen with twelve days' supplies and follow Chrysocheir;[145] in addition they were given some precise instructions as to what course they should follow. This was a sound policy, for Chrysocheir could follow one of several courses. He could continue his retreat. He could attack either the theme of Charsianon or that of the Armeniakon, which were both denuded of their troops.[146] From the description of the Byzantine movements, it appears that Christopher's

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[142] Vita Basilii, 272_7 (ἀπὸ τινος διαστηματος); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 209_{21}; Genesius, 122_{17-18} (ὁ δὲ καθηγεμόνων τῶν σχολῶν διαστηματίζων μιλιου ἐν τὴν παραδρομὴν ἐσκευάγετο.)

[143] Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 265, says that it was on the military road between Ancyra and Tephrike.

[144] It was a good day's journey west of Agrane; i.e., twenty-five miles west of it.

[145] This is mentioned by Genesius, 122_{22-24} (ἄραντε τοὺς ὑπὸ χεῖρα τελοῦντας ὑμῶν ἄρχοντας, καὶ καλλίππους τινάς, καὶ δαπάνας ὡς ἡμερῶν ιβ',)

[146] Vita Basilii, 272-73; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 210; Genesius, 123.

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strategy was to employ the smaller pursuing force not only as an observation unit but also as in a holding role while the main army was employed as the turning force. In this manner the Byzantines perhaps hoped to catch Chrysocheir in a trap. Following its instructions, the smaller force followed Chrysocheir to Bathyryakos (Βαθυρυάκος), where the enemy pitched camp for the evening.[147] The Byzantines, in turn, encamped on a ridge overlooking Chrysocheir's camp, in a wooded and difficult place called Ζωμολόφην.[148]

Among the troops of the Armeniakon and Charsianon themes there existed a great rivalry which now flamed up into a wild enthusiasm for an immediate attack on the Paulician camp.[149] Unable to check this spirit, the generals decided to use it to advantage. They selected 600 men as a turning force while the rest of the army was given explicit orders to remain in camp, but were told on a precise signal to let out a loud cry.[150] The 600 picked men then worked their way down to the camp of the enemy and positioned

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[147] According to Constantine, De Ceremoniis, 414, it was one of the great stopping points on the military road. It therefore must have been at a junction of several roads where troops could concentrate (ὅτε τὰ ἀρμενιακὰ θέματα ὀφείλουσιν ἀποστρατεύεσθαι εἰς Τεφρικὴν εἰς τὸν Βαθυρυάκα). According to Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 220, it was at Scalos or Scara, now Yeni Khan, where the roads from Takat and from the west meet before they go on to Sebasteia.

[148] Genesius, 123_6.

[149] Vita Basilii, 273; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 210.

[150] Vita Basilii, 273_{15-16}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 211_{1-2}; Genesius, 124_4.

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themselves for their attack. Prudently the Byzantines did not attack at night because such an operation could not only incur difficulties, but also might result in a disaster.[151] Just before dawn (πρὸ τῆς ἕω δε') the Byzantines stormed the camp with the loud shout, "Conquer for the Cross!" (σταυρὸς νενίκηκε), taking the Paulicians by surprise (some were still attending to their baggage animals).[152] In the confusion which followed, the Paulicians did not know from what direction the attack was coming. The shouts from the main army resounding through the hills added to their confusion. As a result, the Paulicians fled, pursued by the Byzantines for a distance of thirty miles to a place called Constantine's Mountain, which was near Sebasteia.[153] Here, as Chrysocheir was preparing to escape by jumping across a ditch, he was wounded by a certain Pullader who was formerly his prisoner.[154] Thrown from his horse, one of his aides, Diakonitzes, rushed to his side and placed his master's hand on his knees, but now the rest of the Byzantine forces came up. Finding Chrysocheir lying helpless, they immediately cut off his head and sent it off to the

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[151]The Athenians, for example, failed in such an attack during the Syracusan expeditions.

[152]Vita Basilii, 274$_1$; Genesius, 124$_{15}$ (οἱ δὲ τὲ φορτία τοῖς ὑποφυγίοις ἐκούφιζον)

[153]Ibid., 124$_{19-22}$ (ἀπὸ τοῦ βαθυρύακος διωκόμενοι ἐπὶ μιλίοις λ' ἕως τοῦ καταντικρὺ κωνσταντίνου βουνοῦ,...)

[154]Vita Basilii, 275$_{9-19}$; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 211$_{22}$-212$_{1-18}$; Genesius, 125$_{1-24}$-126$_{1-2}$.

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Emperor Basil, who was now at Petreon.[155] Thus, like Spitamenes, Chrysocheir met his end in a rather inglorious fashion.[156] According to the Vita Basilii, when Basil received the head he shot three arrows into it as he had vowed earlier in a prayer to Saint Michael and the Prophet Elias.[157] With the death of Chrysocheir, the Paulician wars came to an end. Although there were still some Paulician outposts and fortresses, the destruction of these remnants was a part of the subsequent Arab wars. Basil now returned to the imperial capital, where the victory over the Paulicians was celebrated with a ceremonial triumph.

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[155] Vita Basilii, 275_{21-22} (ἐτύγχανε δὲ τηνικαῦτα διάγων κατὰ τὸ Πετρίον λεγόμενον). Diakonitzes was imprisoned.

[156] Arrian Anabasis IV. 17. Spitamenes' head was sent to Alexander by the Massagetian Scythians.

[157] Vita Basilii, 276_{1-4}. Earlier he had made a vow; 271_{19-22}.

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CHAPTER V

BASIL'S WARS WITH THE EASTERN ARABS 873-886: LAND AND NAVAL OPERATIONS

The Byzantine victory over the Paulician leader Chrysocheir and the destruction of the Paulician capital, Tephrike, made the Emperor Basil even more resolute in his determination to continue his offensive policy in the East. On the one hand, there were still Paulician outposts--such as Argaouth (Ἀργαοὺθ),[1] Koutakiou, Stephanou, and Ararach[2]--which had to be subdued. On the other hand, there was the crucially important fortress of Melitene which had to be dealt with. Since the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate in the ninth century, it was the emir of Melitene who had become the arch foe of the empire, acting in unison with the emirs of Tarsus and the Paulicians.[3] Melitene, because of the many roads which converged from the East, was one of

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[1] Argaouth is probably Arga-Arca (Aqca Arqa), which is just south of the Tokhma Su (Melas, Kubakib). On this subject, see Anderson, "Road System," p. 137; Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 66; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 56, 60 (under Argaun).

[2] For these forts, see Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 209_{3-4} (Τὸ Ἀργαοὺθ λεγόμενον φρούριον καὶ τὸ Κουτακιόν καὶ τὸ Στεφάνου καὶ τὸ Ἀραραχ ἐμπρήσας κατέσκαψεν); Vita Basilii, 268_{21}.

[3] On Melitene, see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 251ff.; Bury, E.R.E., pp. 260-67.

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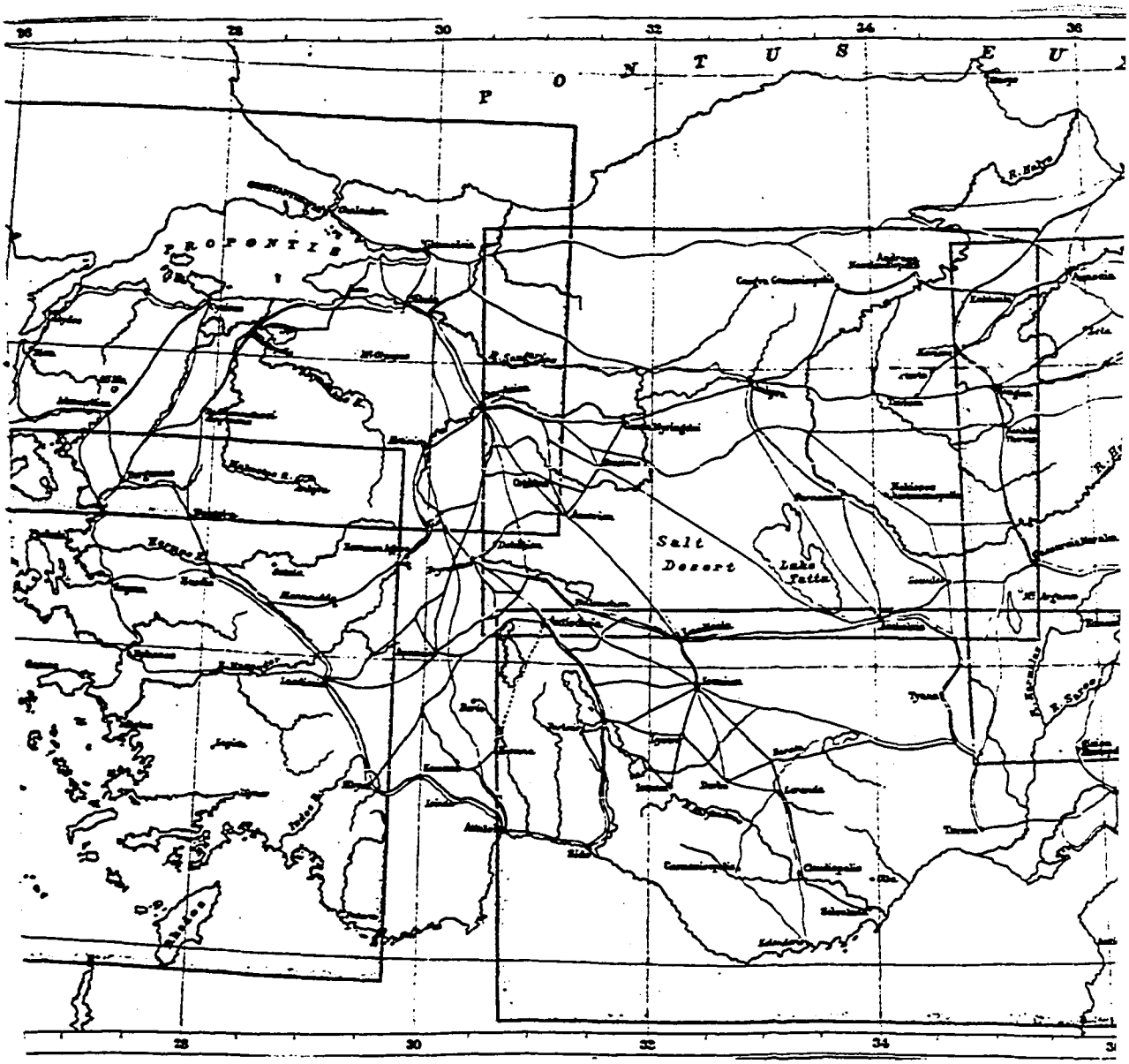

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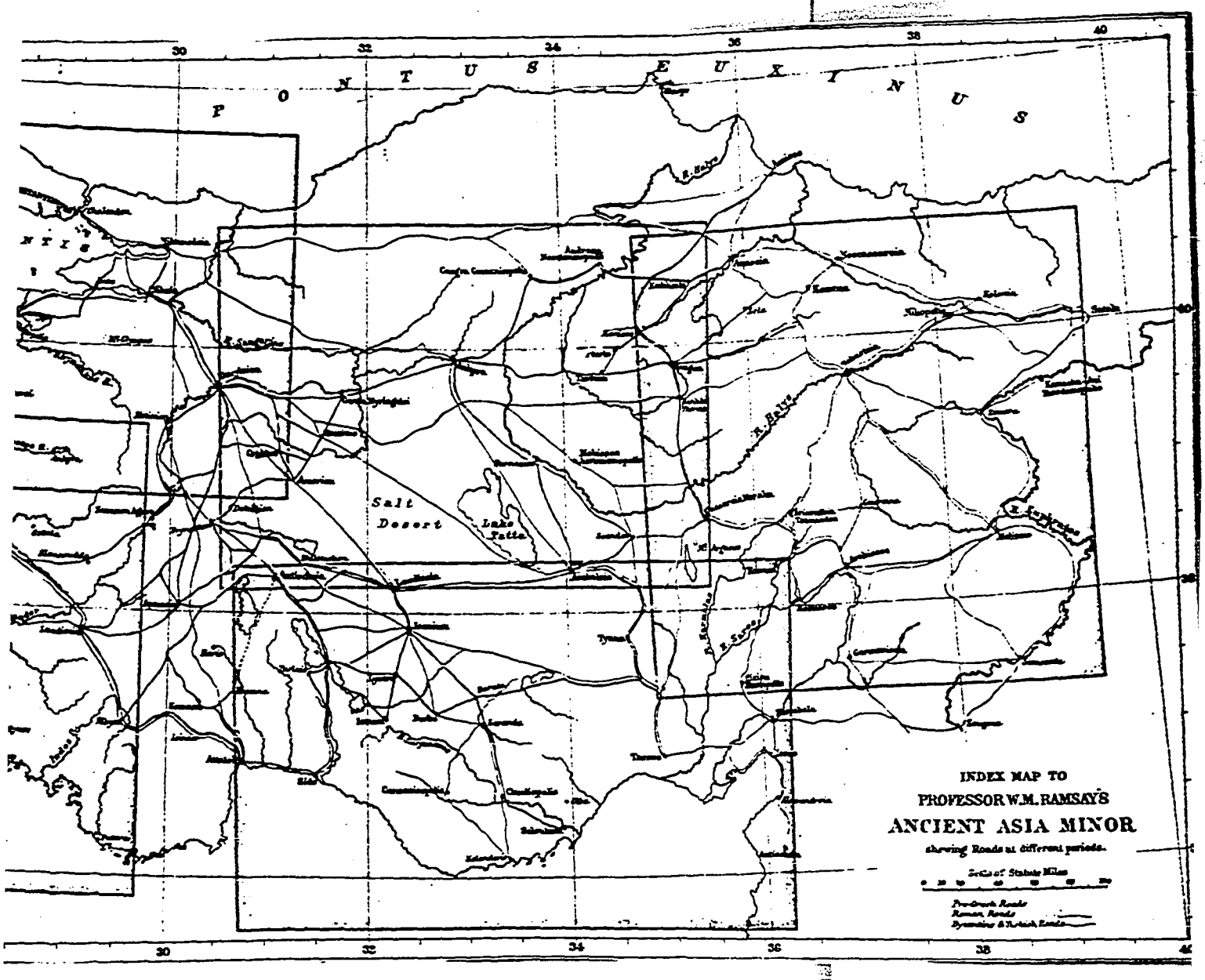

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the most important fortresses on the Moslem frontier.[4] Destroyed by the Moslems when it was first captured by them, the city was rebuilt by the Caliph Mansur (754-775) in 756 and garrisoned with 4,000 men. This garrison in the eighth century held the bridge, three miles distant from the fort, where the high road crosses the Kubâkib River (the ancient Melas or Tokhma Su) near its junction with the Euphrates.[5] This garrison was no doubt larger in the ninth century.

The year 873 was most opportune for an offensive against Melitene because the Abbasid Caliphate was torn by internal disputes and revolution. Melitene was isolated and could hope for little or no outside assistance beyond that which could be sent by her neighboring allies.[6] In the spring of that year the Emperor Basil left the imperial capital and proceeded via the military road which went through Dorylaion to the rallying point (ἄπληκτον) where the thematic forces were to meet him.[7] What this rallying point was is not known for certain, but either Caesareia Mazaka (Karsariye) or Sebasteia was chosen by him. The

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[4]On the roads east from Melitene and its strategic creation, see Anderson, "Road System," pp. 30-31; Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 270, 275-83, 309-13, 350-51.

[5]Baladhuri, ed. de Goeje, p. 186 (quoted by Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, p. 120).

[6]On the weakness of the caliphate at this time, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 232-43; Hitti, op. cit., pp. 316-31, 461-83; B. Lewis, "Government, Society and Economic Life under the Abbasids in Fatimids," in the new Cambridge Medieval History, IV, 638-61.

[7]Dorylaion was always the most direct route to the East; Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 77-78, 197-200, 202-03.

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former was always one of the most convenient rallying points for expeditions to the East. Philippicus, the general of Maurice, used it in 585-586, as did the Emperor Heraclius in his second expedition in 624.[8] If Caesareia Mazaka was indeed the point chosen, the army would have had two possible routes which it could have followed to Melitene. One ran over the plain of Arasaxa after crossing the Karmalas River (Zamanti Su) to Larissa and Herpa on the main stream of the aforementioned river and thence to Tzamandos,[9] an important point in the upper Karmalas valley. From here the road passed over the hills eastward near Gurun through Lopara Lykandos, descended to the Tokhma Su, and went on to Taranta (Daranda-Dalanda, Derende).[10] Lykandos and Taranta had been taken by Basil on his earlier campaign. From Taranta the road went on to Melitene.[11] The other route went from Caesareia Mazaka to Arasaxa-Zerezek across the Anti-Taurus by the Kuru Tchai pass to Sirica.[12] From there it went due

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[8]On this expedition, see Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire, II, 106-07, 232-34; E. Gerland, "Die Persian Feldzüge der Kaiser Herakleios," B.Z., 3 (1898), 330ff.

[9]Tzamandos was an important fortress. See Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 289. He believes it is the modern Azizie. During the tenth century it was a populous and wealthy city situated on a steep rock. See Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 421.

[10]On the location of these sites, see Anderson, "Campaigns," p. 137.

[11]The route is approximately 170 miles from Caesareia to Melitene. On the description of this route, see Anderson, "Road System," pp. 22-26.

[12]On this site, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 274.

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south along the base of Bimboa Dagh to Kokusos-Geuksun[13] and then northeast along the Genk Su to Arabissos.[14] From here it crossed the Khurman Su at Izgun and reached the valley of the Sagutlu Irmak near Alhagli, and then going in an almost straight line over the hills it passed by Osdara, Dandaxina, and Arga-Arca[15] to reach Melitene.[16] It seems more likely, however, that Basil chose Sebasteia as his rallying point rather than Caesareia Mazaka for several reasons. One, the Caesareia-Melitene route had places on the way to Melitene which were still in Arab or Paulician hands, like Arca--some twenty-eight miles to the west of Melitene--for instance.[17] An army proceeding along this route would have had to secure these positions before it could go on to Melitene,[18] but according to the sources these points were not taken until after the failure at Melitene. Two, the Caesareia-Melitene route was much longer--170 and 200 miles to Melitene respectively--while the

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[13]The distance from Kokusos to Arabissos is twenty-eight miles; ibid.

[14]The distance from Arabissos to Arca is approximately seventy to seventy-one miles.

[15]This town was twenty-eight miles from Melitene but was not taken until later by Basil.

[16]For the description of this road, see Anderson, "Road System," pp. 27-31. The entire route from Caesareia to Melitene is approximately 200 miles according to my calculations.

[17]For the capture of ἀργαοῦθ or Arca, see Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 209₃.

[18]This is what had precisely happened to Alexander in the Issus campaign. See Fuller, op. cit., pp. 154-62.

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route from Sebasteia to Melitene was approximately 140 miles long.[19] Three, of the thematic corps which participated in this campaign, the Koloneian and Chaldean are specifically mentioned. Since Sebasteia was a more convenient rallying point for these troops, I can only conclude that this was Basil's point of departure.[20]

From Sebasteia (Sivas) Basil probably took the road south through Blandi and Euspoena to Taranta.[21] The capture of this Paulician fortress on an earlier occasion was an important step in Basil's offensive plan and should not be considered merely as an isolated incident in his Paulician campaign. From here the army moved along the Tokhma Su toward Melitene.

In order to understand Basil's strategy in this campaign, it is necessary to say something with respect to the geography of the eastern frontiers. First, a brief glance at the Byzantine frontier shows that Sebasteia and Caesareia Mazaka were the focal points for all the roads from the west. Therefore any Byzantine offensive would logically come from one of these two points. A closer scrutiny shows that roads from these points form, with Melitene, an almost perfect triangle. If the Byzantines could take Melitene, the areas

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[19] See may in Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 266; compare this with Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze.

[20] On the Chaldean and Koloneian troops, see Vita Basilii, 269$_{16-17}$ (τοὺς Χαλδοὺς καὶ Κολωνιάτας).

[21] See Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 309; Anderson, "Campaigns," p. 137.

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in between could eventually be reduced. Such a drive would then place the Byzantine forces in an excellent position to press beyond the Euphrates. Byzantine strategy in these frontier wars was aimed at focal points and passes on the road systems of Eastern Asia Minor, with an eye to reducing the regions encompassed in a systematic fashion. Often these focal points formed little triangles in which three points were secured while the remaining inner posts were slowly subjugated. Take, for example, the Tephrike campaign. The two focal points used by Basil in this campaign were Sebasteia and Euspoena. Tephrike formed with these two focal points a triangle. When the latter fell, the region within the triangle could be secured and brought under imperial control. Initially Basil failed, but he was successful in taking a number of smaller key fortresses, among which was Abara or Amara on the Guru Cai (Nahr gargariya).[22] Although the capture of these fortresses seems insignificant, Amara was of great importance to the Byzantines and shows distinctly the strategy which the Byzantines were employing. First, its capture extended Byzantine control along the main and shortest artery between Sebasteia and Melitene; i.e., the road from Sebasteia-Euspoena-Aranga-Praetorium-Amara-Melitene.[23] Second, Amara, together with Tephrike and Sebasteia, formed yet another triangle. When Tephrike fell

[22]On the capture of this city, see Vita Basilii, 267_{16}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 207_{1}. On the location, see Anderson, "Campaigns," p. 137; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 56.

[23]On this road, see Anderson, "Road System," pp. 31-32.

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during the expedition of Christopher in 872 A.D., the Byzantine frontier was not only extended to the Euphrates but another important quarter of this area came under imperial control. The capture of Amara was important in still another way. It formed an even larger triangle, with Sebasteia and Caesareia Mazaka, in which several Paulician strongholds were totally isolated. It was this situation, above all, that facilitated the capture of Taranta (Dolandi-Derende) which followed Tephrike and Amara.[24] The capture of Taranta brought another triangular area--Tephrike-Amara-Taranta--under Byzantine control. Once this area was secure, Byzantine arms brought about the subjugation of the Paulician fortress of Lopara-Lykandos, which secured a triangular area with Sebasteia through Tzamandos and Taranta.[25] The fall of this last fortress established the security of the entire region from the Kuru Tchai pass up to the Karmalas Valley to

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[24]On the capture of Taranta, see Vita Basilii, 267_{20}. Constantine's description of the capture of this town is confused and chronologically inaccurate. Apparently he has combined here two events in order to hide his grandfather's initial failure. For example, after describing the unsuccessful initial attempt on Tephrike, Constantine tells of Basil's destruction of several surrounding forts (267). Then he says that the town of Taranta surrendered on hearing about the great slaughter at Tephrike. This example, he adds, was followed by others including Lokana (Lopara Lykandos). However, Georgius Continuatus, 841_{9-20}, records that Basil retreated after his initial defeat; Pseudo-Symeon, 690_{4-13}. On the basis of this combined evidence, I am inclined to believe that Taranta did not fall in 870 but in 872 along with Lokana. See also on this, Hirsch, op. cit., p. 249; Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 41-43.

[25]See Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 309-10.

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Sebasteia and eastward to Amara.[26] The actual subjugation of isolated strongholds in this area probably took some time; however, the capture of Lopara-Lykandos and Taranta opened up another artery to Melitene; i.e., the road from Caesareia Mazaka-Lopara-Taranta-Arca-Melitene.[27] Of all the aforementioned places, only Arca remained at this time outside Byzantine imperial control.[28] These developments placed Basil in a unique position to strike at Melitene, for he had two major arteries open to him by which he could attack and be supplied. Arriving in the region of Melitene in the spring-summer, 873, Basil took up his position in the district of Keramision (ἔνθα τὸ κεραμισιὸν ἐστί)[29] on the Zarnuk River, a tributary of the Tokhma Su.[30] Here Basil encamped between the Zarnuk and the Karakis (Sultan Su, Nahr qaraqis) while flying columns of picked troops were sent out to reduce key fortresses. A glance at the map reveals that there are several tributaries running into the Tokhma Su, giving the appearance of a fan.[31] At the head of each were

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[26] On this region, ibid., pp. 308-10.

[27] For a description of this road, see Anderson, "Road System," pp. 27-31.

[28] On Arca, see Anderson, "Campaigns," p. 137.

[29] Vita Basilii, 268_{21}; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 58.

[30] Vita Basilii, 268_{20} (ἔτι πρὸς τῷ Ζαρνοὺχ ποταμῷ); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 208 (τῷ Ἡτζαρνοὺκ ποταμῷ). See also on this, Ibn Serapion, trans. G. Le Strange, "Description of Mesopotamia and Baghdad Written about the Year 900 by Ibn Serapion," J.R.A.S. (1895), p. 63; Anderson, "Campaigns," p. 139; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 58.

[31] See map, ibid., at end of book.

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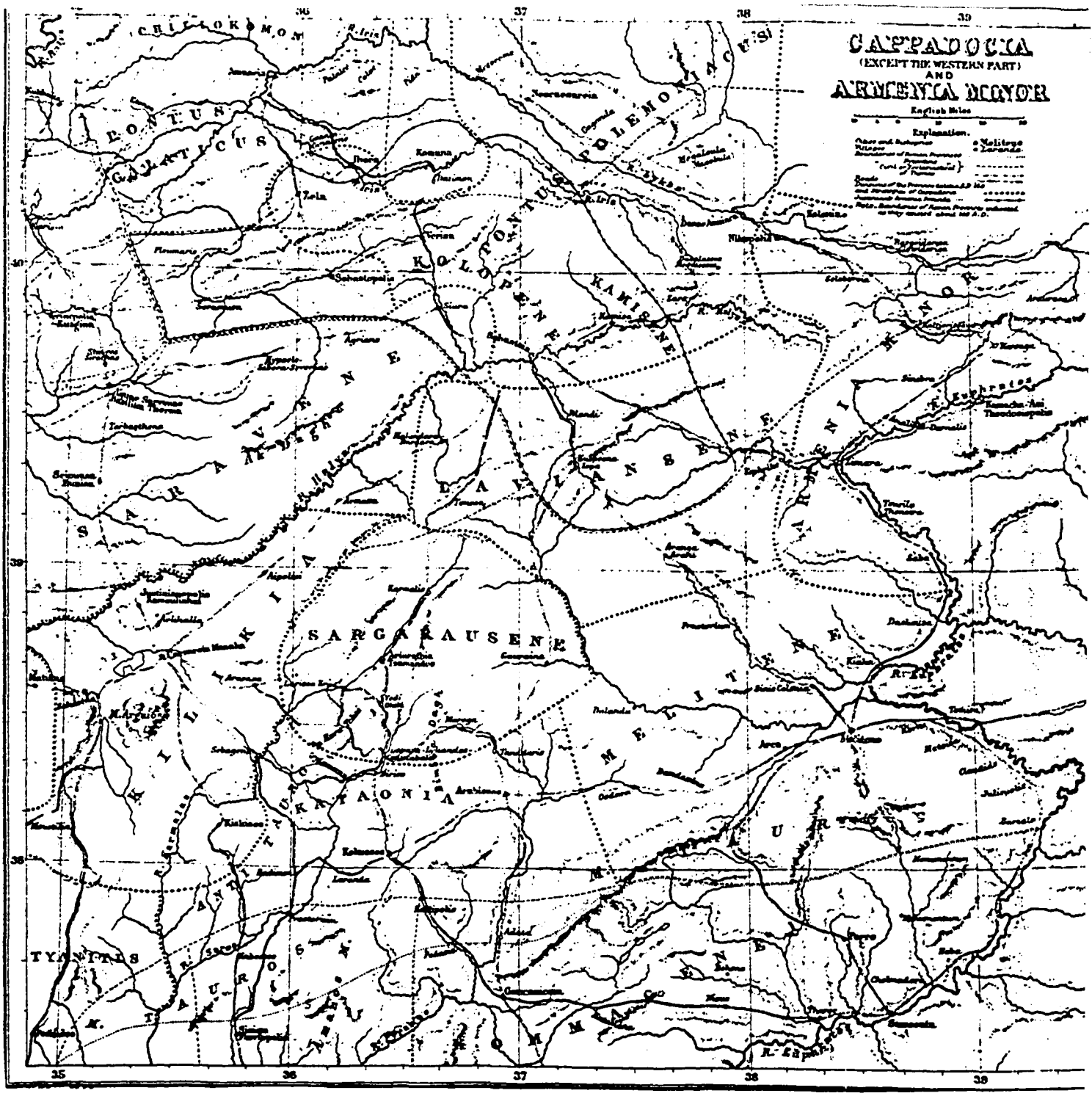

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important fortresses of tactical value which could not be left unattended while Melitene was under attack. For this reason Basil ordered a flying column to deal with these strongholds. The stronghold of Arca (Ἄρκη) was probably taken at this time,[32] but more important was the attack on Zapetra or Sozopetra, which was at the head of the Sultan Su (Nahr qaraqis, Karakis).[33] According to the Arab geographer Baladhuri it was an important fortress.[34] In order to prevent it from aiding Melitene, the Emperor Basil's forces besieged and captured it. According to the sources many of the enemy were killed or captured, while Christians who had been captive for many years were liberated by the imperial forces.[35] The army then ravaged the countryside and proceeded southward to Samosata.[36] Perhaps they took the main road up the Karakis (Sultan Su) which then turned southeast toward Perrhe (Hisn Mansar) and Samosata.[37] Samosata also was captured while the imperial forces ravaged the region

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[32] On Arca (Ἄρκη), ibid., p. 74.

[33] Vita Basilii, 269_{11-13}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 207_{14-23}-208_{1-2}.

[34] Baladhuri, 191 (quoted by Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, p. 121).

[35] See n. 33. Genesius, 115_{18}, also reports the campaign against Samosata, but he confuses this with a later attack on Germaniceia. For date of the expedition, see Tabari (November 7, 872-October 26, 873) in Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 6.

[36] Vita Basilii, 268_{16-19}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 207_{14}-208_{2}; Genesius, 115_{18}.

[37] On routes, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, map opposite p. 266.

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beyond the Euphrates. The flying column then returned with many prisoners and a rich booty to Basil who was still waiting in his encampment on the Zarnuk.[38]

In the summer of 873, Basil's whole army marched on Melitene (μετὰ παντὸς τοῦ στρατοῦ τὴν ἐπὶ Μελιτηνὴν).[39] The reconstruction of the siege of Melitene from the garbled account of Constantine is difficult. In my opinion Basil pursued the following course. First he approached the city, which he found well provisioned. Realizing that Melitene could be supplied from adjacent fortresses, Basil decided to reduce these first of all. Since Rhapsakion (ῥαψακίον) was nearest but on the other side of the Euphrates, the river had to be bridged.[40] The construction of the bridge, of course, gave Constantine a wonderful opportunity to describe his grandfather's prowess in carrying logs and lifting weights which by far exceeded the capability of three soldiers.[41] When the adjacent fortresses were reduced, Basil commenced his siege. According to the Arab historian Tabari, the imperial forces suffered a defeat and lost one of their patricians, a certain Nasr al-Aqrīti'sī,

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[38] Vita Basilii, 268_{20}, explicitly says he was still at Zarnuk (ἔτι).

[39] It was summer (καὶ ὥρᾳ θέρους); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 208_5.

[40] Vita Basilii, 269_{16}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 208_7. For the location of Rhapsakion, see Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 58, who says it is the present Arab Ušagh on the left side of the Euphrates.

[41] Vita Basilii, 269_{1-15}.

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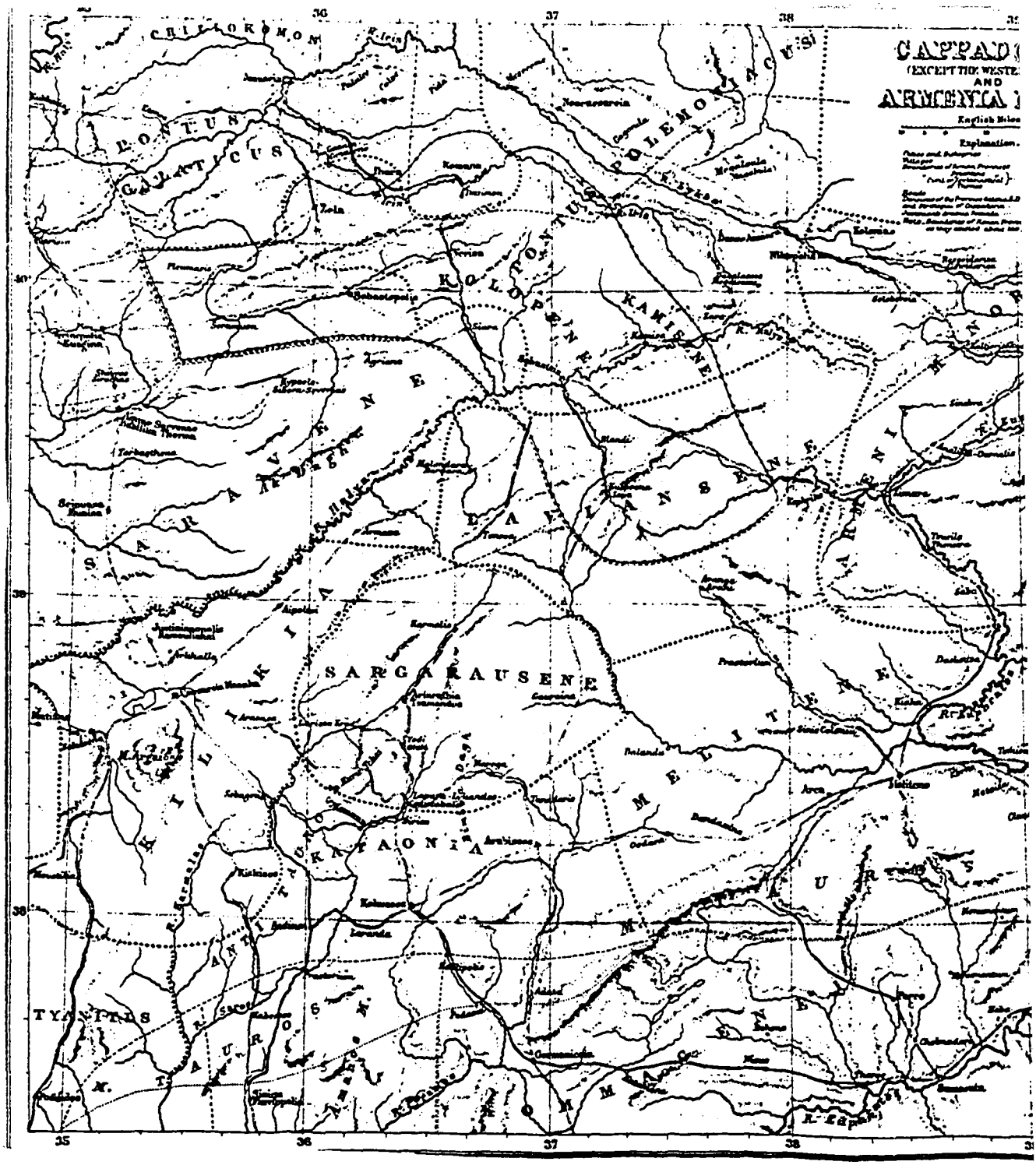

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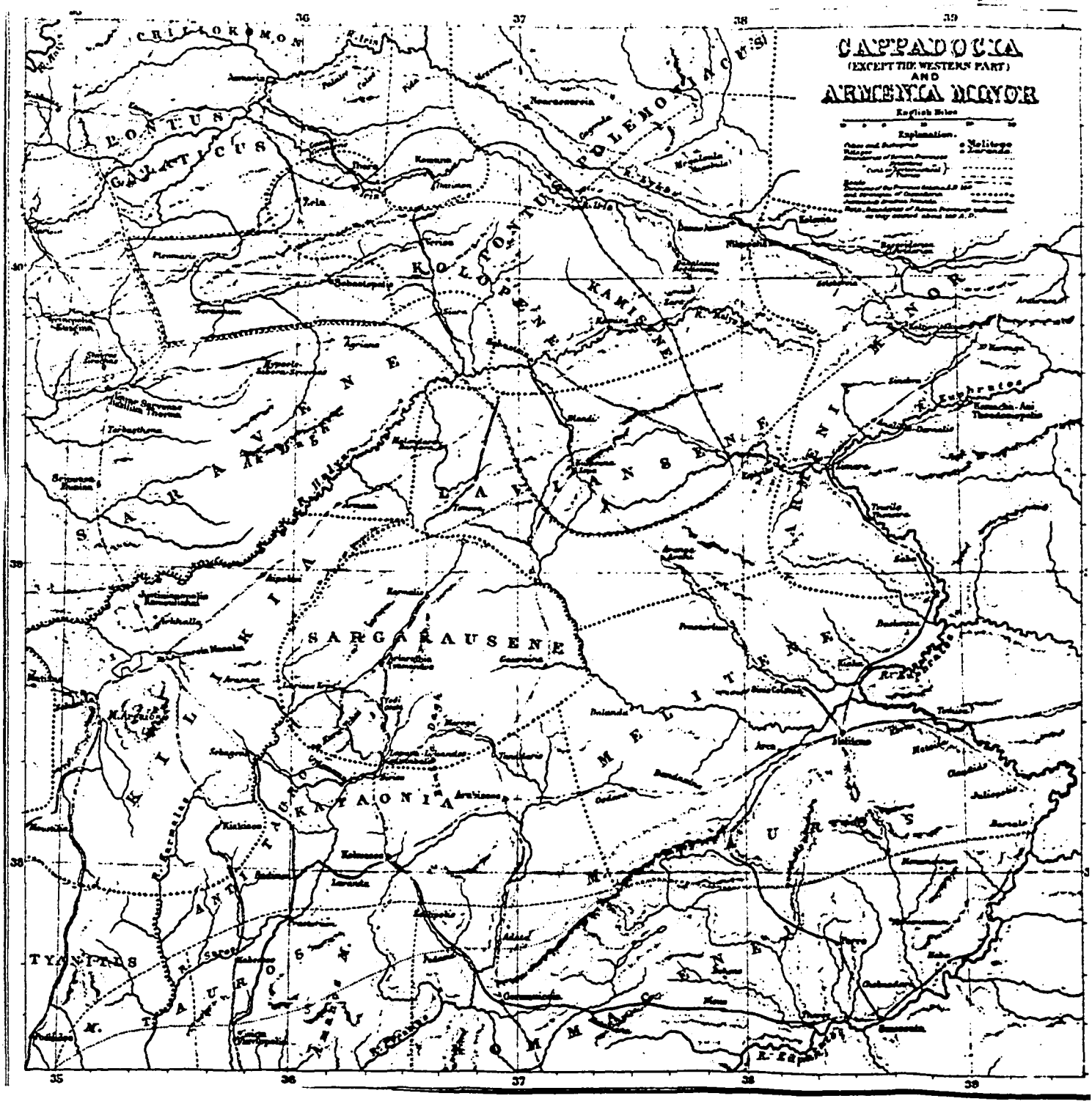

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who was killed by the Emir Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Qābūs.[42] This defeat, however, is not recorded by our Greek sources. Constantine, on the other hand, states that his grandfather defeated the Arabs and shut them up in their fortress. Observing the strength of Melitene, however, Basil gave up the siege and withdrew.[43] Perhaps the reason why Basil failed at Melitene was the division of his forces. Constantine records that Basil sent the thematic corps of Koloneia and Chaldea to operate between the Euphrates and its tributary, the Arsinas (Nahr arsanas), some ninety-five kilometers from Melitene. Here the imperial forces were highly successful in devastating the countryside and sacking the fortresses of Kourtikion,[44] Chachon,[45] Amer,[46] Mourinix,[47] and Abdela.[48] Their departure, however, weakened the Byzantine position before Melitene, eventually forcing Basil to give up the siege. Although such a division prior to a siege seems

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[42]Tabarī; see Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 6.

[43]Vita Basilii, 270; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 208-09.

[44]Vita Basilii, 269_{19} (Κουρτικίου); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 208_{10} (Καρκίνιον); Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 59, says it is Kurdik.

[45]Vita Basilii, 269_{19} (Χαχὸν); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 208_{11} (Γλασχὼν).

[46]Vita Basilii, 269_{20} (Ἄμερ); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 208_{11} (Ἄμαν); Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 60.

[47]Vita Basilii, 269_{20} (Μουρινὶξ); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 208_{11} (Μουρὴξ). Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 60, says it is Murenik.

[48]Vita Basilii, 269_{20} (Ἀβδελα); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 208_{11} (Ἀβδηλα). Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 60, says Abduli or Abdalli is where the Peri Su flows into the Murad Su.

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illogical, one may conjecture that it may be the explanation for Basil's failure.[49]

On his retreat from Melitene, Basil decided to reduce a number of Paulician strongholds, among which were Argaouth, Koutakiou, Stephanou, and Rachat.[50] The reduction of these strongholds has been viewed by some historians as a palliative to Basil's failure before Melitene. Most probably, however, it was a part of Basil's overall strategy.[51] From here Basil returned by the Sebasteia-Dorylaion route to the imperial capital where once again his victory was celebrated with triumph.[52]

For some time following the campaign against Melitene, no major land offensive in the East is reported to have been undertaken by either side. However, the Byzantines more than likely employed this brief respite to consolidate and secure much of the ground which the imperial forces had taken in the 873 campaign. These minor activities of the

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[49]Anderson, "Campaigns," p. 139, argues against this point and believes that the crossing occurred on Basil's retreat. This, however, appears inconceivable to me, for it is hardly possible to assume that a defeated force would risk a foray ninety-five kilometers behind enemy lines.

[50]Argaouth (ἀργαοὺθ), Vita Basilii, 270_{21}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 209_3 (ἀργαοὺθ). Koutakiou (κουτακίου), Vita Basilii, 270_{22}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 209_3 (κουτακίου). Stephanou (στεφάνου), Rachat (ῥαχὰτ), Vita Basilii, 270_{22}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 209_4 (ἀραρὰχ). On the location of these sites, see Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 60.

[51]Anderson, "Campaigns," p. 139; Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 41.

[52]Vita Basilii, 271_{1-10}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 209_{5-15}.

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Byzantine armies have unfortunately escaped the notice of historians and chroniclers, partially because they viewed them as secondary in importance but more so because the emperor and his entourage were absent.[53]

At sea the situation was quite different. Here the Arabs launched marauding attacks against the coastal parts of the empire--on the Adriatic, the Peloponnesus, the islands, and Asia Minor. This renewed activity by the Eastern Arabs at sea is definitely the result of the humiliating defeats which the Byzantine navy inflicted on Damietta in 853 and later again in 859.[54] To rectify their position the Arabs immediately took a number of steps. The Arab chronicler Kindî records that the immediate effect of the 853 raid led to the construction of a fortress at Damietta by the order of the Caliph Mutawakkil (842-861) in February, 854 (Ramadan 3, 228-229 A.H.).[55] More significant, however, is the fact that Moslem chroniclers record this incident as serving as an incentive for the creation of an Egyptian

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[53]In this characteristic the Byzantine writers were little different from ancient writers, who also focused their attention on the king.

[54]Maqrîzî records a number of Byzantine raids against Damietta (quoted by A. Fahmy, Muslim Sea Power in the Eastern Mediterranean (London, 1950), p. 31). Tabarî also records the raid of 853. See note on Damietta before.

[55]Kindî, The Governors and Judges of Egypt (Kitab al-Wulah wa Kitab al-Qudah), ed. R. Guest, Gibb Memorial Series (London, 1912), XIX, 202. The geographer Baladhuri, 118, also states that Mutawakkil distributed the fleet and naval forces among the Syrian coast towns. One of their major bases which was used to apprehend Byzantine raids in Syria was Sur, but Mutawakkil also established a shipbuilding yard at Akka (Acre), which under Ibn Tulun surpassed all others.

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fleet and the fortifying of regions on the Mediterranean coast by the Governor Anbasa ibn Ishaq. The Bishop of Ashmunayan, Severus, for instance, writes:

> Anbasa ordered the construction of ships in all coastal towns because the Greeks came to Damietta at that time. . . . Consequently many ships were built and every year they repaired those which were damaged and built new ones in place of those which were wrecked. They sailed in them to the land of the Greeks and made war on them.[56]

From the words of Severus as well as from other sources, one can clearly see that the Arabs renewed their naval offensive with great vigor after their humiliation at Damietta,[57] for their fleets showed an intense activity in the eastern Mediterranean, the Aegean, and even in the Ionian Sea. In these marauding raids the island of Crete was often employed as a launching point. Strategically located and virtually equidistant to all major points in the empire, this island had fallen into the hands of the Arabs

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[56]Severus, the tenth-century Coptic bishop, is one of the most celebrated sources for Egyptian naval history, for he gives important information about Egyptian arsenals, naval expenditures, naval service, etc. Severus, History of the Egyptian Church (known as the History of the Holy Church), ed. and trans. Yassa abd al-Masih and O. H. E. Burmester (Cairo, 1943), II, Part 1, 13.

[57]According to Arab sources, Damietta was one of the major naval arsenals of the Moslems. It was situated on the eastern arm of the Nile delta, about seven miles from its mouth and less than one mile to the west of Lake Manzala. To the north lay a narrow belt of sand dividing it from the Mediterranean and forming a corridor to the sea. Here large supplies were collected for raiding fleets before an attack. According to Tabari (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 18), when the Byzantines attacked in 853 they found large supplies of arms destined for the ruler of Crete, and they burned a storehouse of sails.

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led by Abu Hafs during Michael II's reign (820-829).[58] Almost immediately the Cretan Arabs focused their attacks on the Aegean. The island of Aegina[59] was repeatedly devastated by them; so was Paros.[60] During the reign of

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[58]On Crete, see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 49-61. The island of Crete was captured by Spanish Arabs who fled the persecution of al-Hakam in Spain and settled in Egypt. Here, under the leadership of Abu Hafs, they soon felt themselves strong enough to seize Alexandria in 818-819. In 825, however, al-Mamun's general, Abdallah ibn Tahir, regained the country and the Spanish Arabs obtained permission to leave Egypt. Thus Abu Hafs with forty ships chose Crete as the new homeland. After burning his ships, he and his followers proceeded to subjugate the island, where he apparently met with little resistance for he took twenty-nine towns and reduced the inhabitants to slavery. On the island Abu Hafs then built a new capital which derived its name from a deep moat which surrounded it--Chandax. The strategic importance of the place brought immediate response from the imperial forces, but all their attempts to recapture it in the ninth century failed. The first attempt by Photeinus and Damianus led to a rout. The second under Kraterus with seventy ships also resulted in defeat. Under the able Theoctistus the island may have been recovered (this is Grégoire's view), but it must have quickly returned to Arab hands for Michael III and Caesar Bardas also prepared to retake the island in 866. This expedition also ended in failure with the murder of Bardas.

[59]Vita Theodorae Thessalonicensis (892), ed. E. Kurtz, Mémoires de l'Académie Imp. des Sciences de St. Pétersbourg, VIII[e] series VI, Part 1 (1902), p. 2, chap. xxiv. On Theodora, see F. Halkin, Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca (3 vols.; Brussels, 1957), II, 273 (hereafter cited as Halkin, B.H.G.; Vita Lucae Junior, ed. Migne, P.G. 111, cols. 442-44. On Luke, see Halkin, B.H.G., II, 60.

[60]Vita Theoctistae Lesbia (ninth century), Acta Sanctorum Nov IV (1923), 221-33; Halkin, B.H.G., II, 270.

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Theophilus (829-842) they pillaged the coasts of Caria and Ionia, attacking even the monastery on Mt. Latros.[61] In Michael III's reign (842-867) they ravaged the Cyclades, laying waste the island of Lesbos.[62] Their successes perhaps even made them bolder, for Theophanes Continuatus records that in the 860's they penetrated into the Hellespont as far as Proconnesus.[63]

With Basil's preoccupation in the East, the Cretan Arabs haughtily enlarged their sphere of operation to the Adriatic. In 872, for instance, according to the Western chronicler John of Venice, the Arabs from Crete ravaged the towns on the coast of Dalmatia, among which was Bracia, an island south of Spalato, returning with an enormous booty.[64]

The Aegean was by no means ignored by the Arabs either. Probably in the same year the Cretan Arabs, led by their

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[61] Theophanes Continuatus, 137_{1-7}.

[62] The attack on Lesbos (861-862) is described by Vita Euthymii Junior, ed. L. Petit, in Revue del'Orient chriétien, 8 (1903), 185-89 (Vie et office de saint Euthyme lejeune, in Bibliotheque Hagiographique Orientale (Paris, 1904), V, 14-51).

[63] Theophanes Continuatus, 196_{16-23}, says that in the year 860 they ravaged the Cyclades and the Hellespont as far as the Proconnesus.

[64] John of Venice, Chronicon, ed. H. Pertz, in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptorum (Hanover, 1846), VII, 19, 23-33 (hereafter cited as John of Venice, M.G.H. SS.):

> "Sequenti vero anno [872] mense Madii item Sarraceni Creta insula egredientes, quasdam Dalmaciarum urbes depopulati sunt, pariterque etiam Braciensem ejusdem provinciae urbem invaserunt. . . . Predicti autem Sarraceni, urbibus quas diximus devastatis, cum inestimabili preda ad propriam sunt reversi."

For location, see Krekic, op. cit., p. 17 (see map, Brac).

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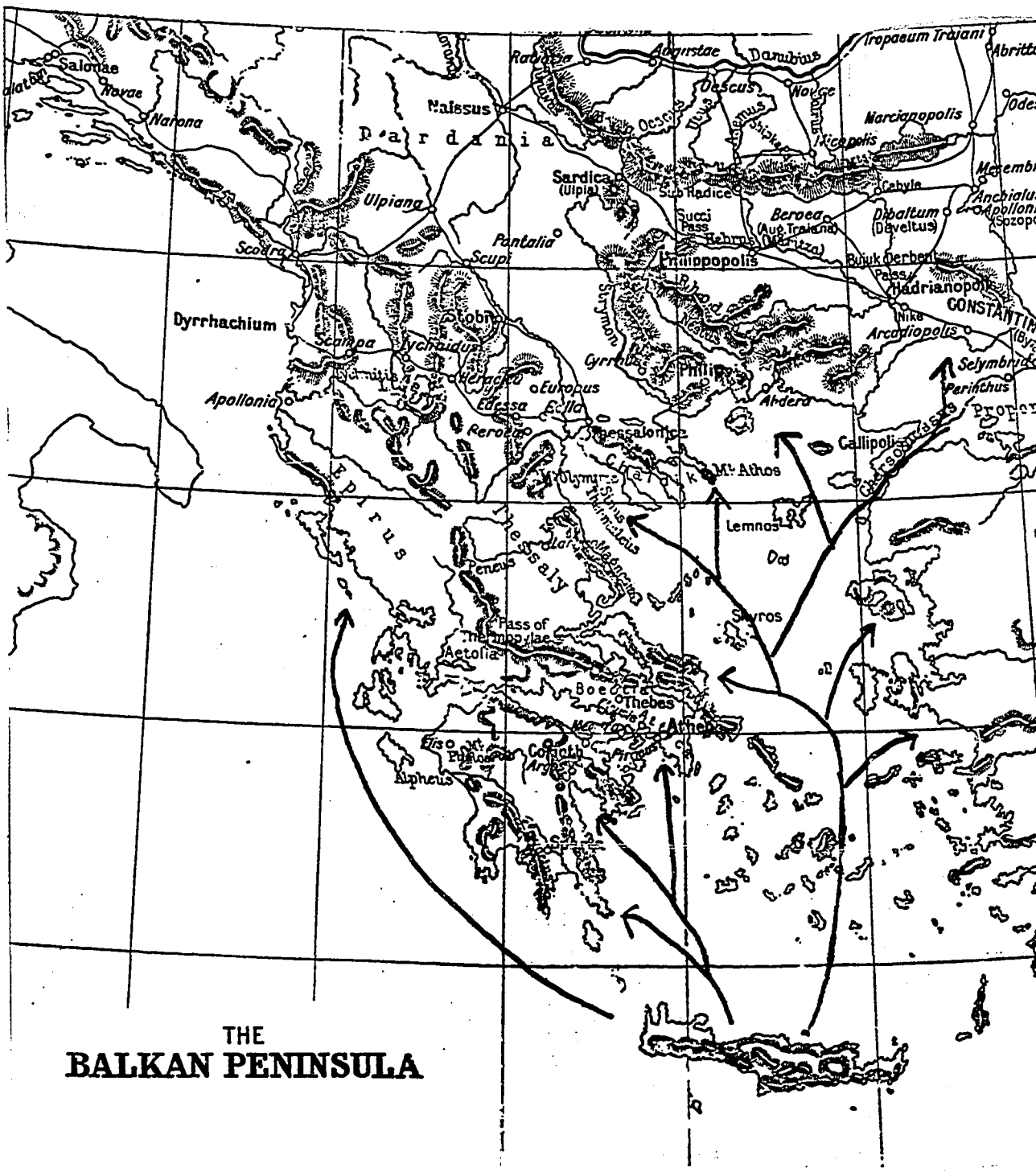

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Emir Sael (Σαὴλ), the son of Abu Hafs (Ἀπόχαψ), and a Christian renegade called Photius, launched a major attack.[65] According to the sources, on Crete they took with them twenty-seven large battleships (κουμπαριών), Cumpariis, the Arabic Shalandi), but were joined by many other ships which are described as σακτούρας (Ghurab) and galleys (γαλέας), probably undecked warships.[66] Together the Arab fleet swept through the Aegean islands with fire and sword, again reaching Proconnesus in the Hellespont.[67] Many of the inhabitants of the islands were carried off in the wake of this attack, probably to be sold into slavery. Such boldness on the part of the Arabs did not go unchallenged. Informed,

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[65] Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 227_{1-3} (Σαὴλ γὰρ τοῦ Ἀπόχαψ ἀρχηγοῦ τῆς Κρήτης ὑπάρχοντος, Φώτιός τις ἀνὴρ πολεμιστὴς καὶ δραστήριος); Vita Basilii, 299_{14-16}.

[66] According to Constantine, 299_{17-19}, the Moslems used three types of warships: (1) κομβαρία or Combarii, (2) σακτούρας or Sacturas, (3) γαλέας or Galeas. According to Fahmy, op. cit., pp. 130-37, the first was the largest and heaviest of their warships and was probably called by the Arabs by the term Shalandî (plural Shalandiyyât). According to Ibn Mamâtî, it was a decked ship on which soldiers fought while the rowers plied their oars beneath them. If it was like the Shînî, another warship used by the Arabs, it had 140 oars and probably as many as 150 foot soldiers. The Sacturas was perhaps equivalent to the Ghurâb, for the word meant raven (= corvus in Latin), and was noted for its speed. This ship carried rowers and troops in number up to 180. The Galeas was probably an undecked war galley. Fahmy also mentions that two other types of vessels were employed by the Arabs: (1) the Harrâga, a warship filled with combustibles for firing enemy ships, and (2) Tarrîda, a transport vessel. The contingents are mentioned in Vita Basilii, 299_{13-23}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 227_{1-8}.

[67] Vita Basilii, 299_{21} (δὲ καὶ μέχρι τῆς ἐν Ἑλλησπόντῳ Προικοννήσου....); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 227_{6-7}.

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perhaps, through a sort of early warning system,[68] a Byzantine fleet under the Admiral Nicetas Oryphas intercepted them as they were departing near Kardia.[69] Here a naval

[68] Since a system like this existed on land, there is no reason to doubt that a similar system did exist on the coast to warn the capital. The Arabs had a system like this which is described by Muqaddasî (Fahmy, op. cit., pp. 54-55):

> "Whenever a Greek vessel appears the Moslems sound the horns; at night they light a beacon on the tower and in the daytime they make a great smoke. Between the watch stations along the coast are high towers guarded by a company of men who light the beacon as soon as a Greek ship arrives and so pass on the signal from one tower to another. Before an hour has elapsed trumpets sound in the city and drums beat in the tower calling those responsible to their watch station: they hurry out in force with their arms."

These stations in Syria existed at Gaza, Ascalon, Jaffa, Arsuf, Sur, Tripolis, and Akka. Since the military systems of the Arabs and Byzantines were so much alike, I believe that Nicetas was informed by a similar warning system.

[69] Vita Basilii, 299_{24}-300_{1-6}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 227_{9-15}. Kardia (Καρδίαν) at the mouth of the Aegaei (Αἰγαίου) is in the Thracian Chersonnesus. According to both sources, Greek fire (ὑγρῷ πυρὶ) was used to destroy twenty ships. On the subject of Greek fire the following works are important: M. Berthelot, La Chimie au moyen âge (Paris, 1893), I, 100-35; H. W. L. Hime, The Origin of Artillery (London, 1915), pp. 45-63; M. Jähns, Handbüch einer Geschichte des Kriegswesens von der Urzeit bis zur Renaissance (Leipzig, 1880), pp. 512-14; C. Oman, A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages (London, 1924), pp. 206, 209-10; C. Zenghelis, "Le Feu grégeois et les armes à feu des Byzantins," Byzantion, 7 (1932), 265-86; N. D. Cheronis, "Chemical Warfare in the Middle Ages. Kallinikos Prepared Fire," Journal of Chemical Education, 14 (1937), 360-65; M. J. de Goeje, "Quelques observations sur le Feu grégeois," Estudios de Erudicion Oriental (Saragossa, 1904); J. Reinaud and M. Favé, "Du Feu grégeois," J. As., 13 (1949), 257-327; A. Dain, "Appellations grecques du Feu grégeois," Mélanges A. Ernout (Paris, 1940), pp. 121-27; M. Mercier, Le Feu grégeois (Paris, 1952); B. Bagatti, "Bombe a 'fuoco greco' in Palestina (VII-XIII secolo)," Faenza, 39 (1953), 35-38; J. R. Partington, History of Greek Fire and Gunpowder (Cambridge, 1960). The recipe for Greek fire is preserved by a late-ninth or tenth-century source, Marcus Graecus:

> "Take pure sulphur, tartar, sarcocolla [Persian gum], pitch, dissolved nitre, petroleum, and huite de gemme; boil these ingredients together; saturate towel with the

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battle was fought, with Nicetas opening the attack. Employing Greek fire he destroyed twenty warships;[70] the remaining part of the fleet apparently made its escape. The entire Cretan fleet, however, was not present. Perhaps only one division under the emir himself swept through the island while another under Photius concentrated on the Peloponnesus, for one hears of Arab attacks on Methone, Pylos, Patras, and the suburbs of Corinth.[71] It is, in my opinion, highly doubtful that a defeated fleet would reorganize itself after losing twenty warships and then launch another attack. The distance from Kardia to the Peloponnesus--i.e., Methone, Patras, and Corinth--makes this, in my opinion, highly dubious.[72] Furthermore, no Byzantine admiral with the experience which Nicetas had would ever allow an Arab fleet,

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concoction, and set fire to it. The conflagration will spread, and can only be extinguished by urine, vinegar, or sand."
Quoted from Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire, II, 319.

[70] Vita Basilii, 300_{3} (εἴκοσι); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 227_{12} (εἴκοσι).

[71] Vita Basilii, 300_{7-17}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 227_{17-20}. Since only Photius is mentioned in this attack it is, in my opinion, further evidence to illustrate my point. On the dating of this battle there is some dispute. Older historians date it approximately in the year 882-883. See Le Beau, op. cit., p. 314. He also considers them separate operations. Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 47, believes it occurred during the period of Basil's preoccupation in the East. I agree with Vasiliev, for the Byzantine admiral in question was Nicetas. By 880 A.D., if not earlier, Nasar replaced Nicetas as Drungarius of the Fleet.

[72] The most valid argument is the absence of Saël in this attack. Only Photius is mentioned by both Constantine and Scylitzes-Cedrenus.

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even a defeated one, to escape without pursuing it to ensure that it would not regroup and strike again.[73] I conjecture that the attack of the Cretan fleet on the Peloponnesus under Photius was part of a dual attack.

Probably as Nicetas was pursuing the defeated Arab fleet of Sael, he learned of Photius' devastating attack on the Peloponnesus.[74] Knowing the Arabs would have taken certain precautions to ensure their escape by setting up watch stations at Cape Malea and Taenarum, Nicetas headed immediately for the Saronic Gulf and arrived at the Corinthian harbor of Cenchraea (Κεγχρεῶν).[75] Here, in order to save time, he dragged his ship across the isthmus and surprised the Arab contingent under Photius. In a battle which followed the Byzantines won an overwhelming victory, sinking part of and burning another part of the Cretan fleet. The Arabs' losses were probably great, and those who managed to get ashore were hunted down. The greatest blow to the Arabs, however, was the loss of their admiral, Photius.[76]

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[73] On the career of Nicetas briefly, see Guilland, "Le Drongaire de la flotte," in Recherches sur les institutions Byzantines, I, 537.

[74] The towns which were attacked by the Arabs were Methone, an important seaport in the south; Pylos; Patras, seat of the strategos of the Peloponnesus; and Corinth. See Vita Basilii, 300_{17}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 228_{1}, adds the name of Pylos.

[75] Cape Malea (Μαλέου) is mentioned by Constantine, Vita Basilii, 300_{20}; Taenarum (Ταινάρου) is added by Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 228_{3}. Cenchraea was the eastern harbor of Corinth.

[76] Vita Basilii, 300-01; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 228.

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These devastating attacks from Cretan-based fleets were paramount in convincing Basil that steps should be taken to ensure the security of the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Ionian seas. The solution to this problem was simple--the conquest of Crete. This, however, was easier said than done, as could be seen from the numerous failures of the past. A basic factor in these earlier failures lay in the utter lack of understanding that Crete could be subjugated only if it were isolated from her sources of supply; namely, the arsenals of Syria[77] and Egypt.[78] A definite blow toward severing the ties between Crete and her supplies was the

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[77]The arsenals in Syria and Cilicia were Laodicea, on the Syrian coast, and Sur, which is described as strongly fortified. According to Baladhuri, 118 (quoted by Fahmy, op. cit., p. 53), it was the most important naval station until Mutawakkil's reign. Tyre was another important base. Yaqubi (quoted, ibid.) describes it as follows: "Tyre is the chief of the coastal cities and contains the arsenal. From here sail the Caliph's ships on expeditions against the Greeks. Under Ibn Tulun Akka (Acre) was developed into a great naval base." There is an account of its construction recorded by Muqaddasi (quoted, ibid., p. 59):

> "Akka was a fortified city on the sea coast . . . the defences of which were greatly strengthened after Ibn Tulun visited. He had already seen the fortifications of Tyre where the harbor was protected by an encircling wall, and he wanted to fortify Akka on similar lines. Artificers were brought from all over the province."

Muqaddasi then goes on to describe its construction by his grandfather, Abu Bakr, an architect. Tarsus was another important base. Ibn Hawqal (quoted, ibid., p. 60) describes it as "a great city, surrounded by a double stone wall and he who attacked from it was always victorious by sea or land and seized much booty, as was evident from the news heard and the traces left behind."

[78]According to Tabari (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 315-17), when the Byzantines attacked Damietta in 853 they destroyed, among other things, supplies destined for the emir of Crete.

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capture of Cyprus,[79] for Cyprus was used frequently by both sides as an advanced base or a rendezvous for attacks. The importance of Cyprus as a rallying point can be seen from the words of a ninth-century source, Abulfaraj:

> When the government has decreed an expedition, the governors of Egypt and Syria receive orders to make the necessary preparations. The place for the meeting of the fleet is Cyprus. The governor of the Syrian frontiers has the command-in-chief. The costs of a maritime expedition of this kind come to some 100,000 dinars.[80]

The Tactica of Leo VI corroborates this:

> When the barbarians from Egypt and Syria and Cilicia are gathering for an expedition against the Romans, the commanders of the naval provinces must proceed with their squadron to Cyprus, before the barbarian ships have joined up with one another; and must dispatch against them a naval force adequate to deal with the barbarian navy while it is still in detail, or else burn their ports.[81]

From these passages one can see that Cyprus was a key to any major naval offensive which would be undertaken in

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[79]This can also be seen from the fact that travellers and pilgrims used it en route to the Holy Land. Saint Willibald in 722-723, for example, passed from Lycia to Paphos and Constantia en route to Syria. Saint Constantine Judaeus (ninth century), Acta Sanctorum Nov IV, 638, visited it during Basil's reign. Military expeditions rallied there and put in after a successful raid. John Cameniates, De Excidio Thessalonicensi, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, CSHB, 1858), 596, chap. lxxvii, says that Leo of Tripolis, returning from the sack of Thessalonika, put in at Paphos (Τῆς Πάφου).

[80]Abulfaraj Kodama ibn Jafar (948), quoted by G. Hill, A History of Cyprus (Cambridge, 1940), I, 290.

[81]Leo the Wise, Tactica, ed. Migne, P.G. 107, col. 1072C (Νῦν δὲ τοῖς ἐξ Αἰγύπτου καὶ Συρίας καὶ Κιλικίας...)

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the Mediterranean and Aegean.[82] The capture of the island would isolate the island of Crete and deprive her of valuable supplies and reinforcements, perhaps also of building materials.[83] In Byzantine hands Cyprus could, furthermore, be employed as a base for attacks on Tarsus and Syria in coordination with major land offensives.[84]

With these factors in mind Basil focused his attention on recovering Cyprus. Since 647 the island was a demilitarized zone where Arabs and Greeks lived according to a mutual agreement.[85] This condominium was actually

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[82]This can be seen from many examples. In 947 an Egyptian fleet of 1,000 dromons on its way against the Byzantines was caught in a Cypriot harbor by the Cibyrrhaeot fleet and annihilated; Theophanes, 424_{1-7}. In 790 an Arab fleet first rallied at Cyprus and then attacked the Cibyrrhaeot fleet in the Gulf of Attaleia, capturing the Byzantine admiral; ibid., p. 465_{12-26}. In 910 the Byzantine Admiral Himerius first sacked Latakieh and on his way back raided Cyprus; E. W. Brooks, "The Relations between the Empire and Egypt from a New Arabic Source," B.Z., 22 (1913), 381-91.

[83]On building materials used in Arab vessels, see Fahmy, op. cit., pp. 75-85.

[84]Frequently the emirs of Tarsus also coordinated with their land and sea attacks. See Tabari (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 9-10).

[85]There are several works on the history of Cyprus. Among the older works are: J. M. J. L. de Mas Latrie, Histoire de l'île de Chypre sous le règne des Princes de la Maison de Lusignan (3 vols.; Paris, 1852-1861) (I: history; II-III: documents); K. N. Sathas, Μεσαιωνικὴ βιβλιοθήκη (Venice, 1873), II; R. H. Lang, Cyprus (London, 1878); A. A. Sakellarios, Τὰ Κυπριακὰ ἤτοι γεωγραφία, ἱστορία καὶ γλῶσσα τῆς νήσου Κύπρου (2 vols.; Athens, 1890-1891); E. Oberhummer, Die Insel Cypern (Munich, 1903); J. Hackett, History of the Orthodox Church in Cyprus (London, 1901). More recent studies include: R. Gunnis, Historic Cyprus (London, 1936); K. P. Georgiades, Ἡ καταγωγὴ τῶν Κυπρίων (Leukosia, 1936); G. A. Sotiriou, Τὰ Βυζαντινὰ Μνημεῖα τῆς Κύπρου (Athens, 1935), I; Hill, op. cit.; R. J. H. Jenkins, "Cyprus between Byzantium and Islam A.D. 688-965," in Studies Presented to D. M. Robinson, II (1953), 1006-14; R. H. Dolley, Academie Royale de Belgique, Bulletin de la classe des lettres sciences, morales, et politiques, 34 (1948), 209ff.

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established by a treaty between Justinian II (685-695, 705-711) and the Caliph Abd al-Malik (685-705) in 688 A.D. Unfortunately, only the following provisions of it are known: (1) The island was mutually divided between Greeks and Arabs, with each pledging strict neutrality.[86] (2) Taxes were to be collected by representatives for both sides and allotted in equal shares to each.[87] (3) Christians and Moslems could go to the aid of one another if they were molested by either side.[88] It was these conditions which influenced Basil to regain Cyprus. Perhaps he actually believed that the Greek inhabitants would collaborate and assist him. Be that as it may, Basil did succeed in

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[86]Mas'udi, Les Prairies d'or, III, 282: "Un traité en vertu duquel ils devaient rester neutres entres les Grecs et les Musulmans belligérants, et payer le Kharadj mi-partie aux Musulmans, mi-partie aux Grecs." This is corroborated by Saint Constantine Judaeus, 638, who says that Christians and Arabs enjoyed equal rights of citizenship (ἀναδασμος πολιτείας).

[87]Theophanes, 363. This is corroborated by Constantine, De administrando imperio, 99_{14-16}, who says: "And the taxes of Cyprus and Armenia and Iberia to be held commonly and in equal shares by both parties." For the collection and division of taxes, there must have been Byzantine and Arab representatives and revenue officers on the island. In the eighth century there is even a seal of a Dioiketes named John. See, on this, G. Schlumberger, La sigillographie del'Empire byzantin (Paris, 1884), p. 304. The chronicler Theophanes, 446, also mentions an imperial official, Lacherphabes, the ἐκ προσώπου in 773. The Taktikon Uspenski, p. 140, mentions an ἄρχων. The place of his residence is unknown, but Jenkins, Studies Presented to D. M. Robinson, II, 1010, suggests Polis tis Chrysochou or Kerynia. The Byzantines on the island apparently carried on naval intelligence by spying in the Gulf of Tarsus, Tripolis, and Latakieh. The Arab resident probably stayed at Constantia.

[88]Nicholas Mysticus, ed. Migne, P.G. 111, cols. 27ff., has preserved this article.

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recapturing the island.[89] According to his grandson, Constantine, the commander of the expedition was a certain Alexios, an Armenian who tore the island from the hands of the Arabs.[90] From all indications Cyprus was promptly reorganized as a theme, for a letter of Photius dated 878 to the Eparch (ἔπαρχων) Stauracius[91] reprimands this official for allowing various abuses on the island. From its general tone, one can only conjecture that the letter was written to a subordinate.[92]

Byzantine rule on the island of Cyprus, however, was ephemeral, lasting only seven years.[93] Perhaps the Cypriots did not give the Byzantine government the substantial support for which they may have hoped. It may be that they preferred their neutral semi-independence to Byzantine centralization. This conjecture gains support from the fact

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[89] Pertusi, De thematibus, 80-81, is the only source on this subject.

[90] Ibid., 81_{22-23} (Ἀλέξιον στρατηγὸν ... Τὸ γένος ἀρμένιον)

[91] Photius, Epistolae, ed. Migne, P.G. 102, 984-85; also ed. J. N. Valettas (London, 1864), 527, letter 213. On this subject see, also, V. Grumel, Les Regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople, II, Fasc. II (Socii Assumptionistae Calcedonenses, 1936), p. 114, No. 534. There is a dispute as to what function this Eparch had. Nor is the precise function of the Archon known. See, on this, V. Benesevic, "Die byzantinischen Ranglisten," B.Ng.Jb., 5 (1927), 553 (n. 25); Ahrweiler, Byzance et la Mer, pp. 85-90.

[92] Opposed to this view is Jenkins, Studies Presented to D. M. Robinson, II, 1009.

[93] Phrantzes, Chronicon, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, CSHB, 1838), 105_{3-8}.

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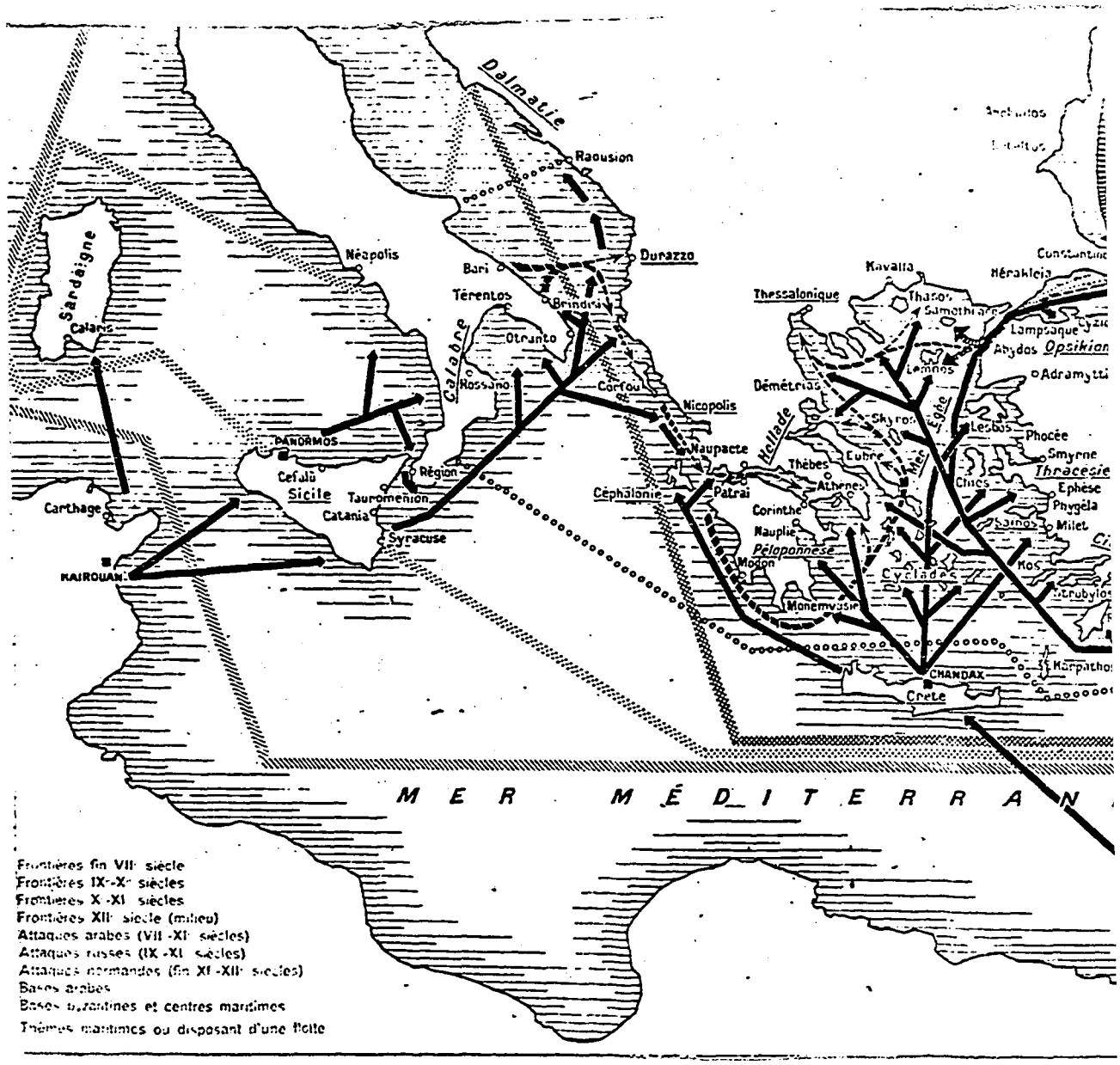

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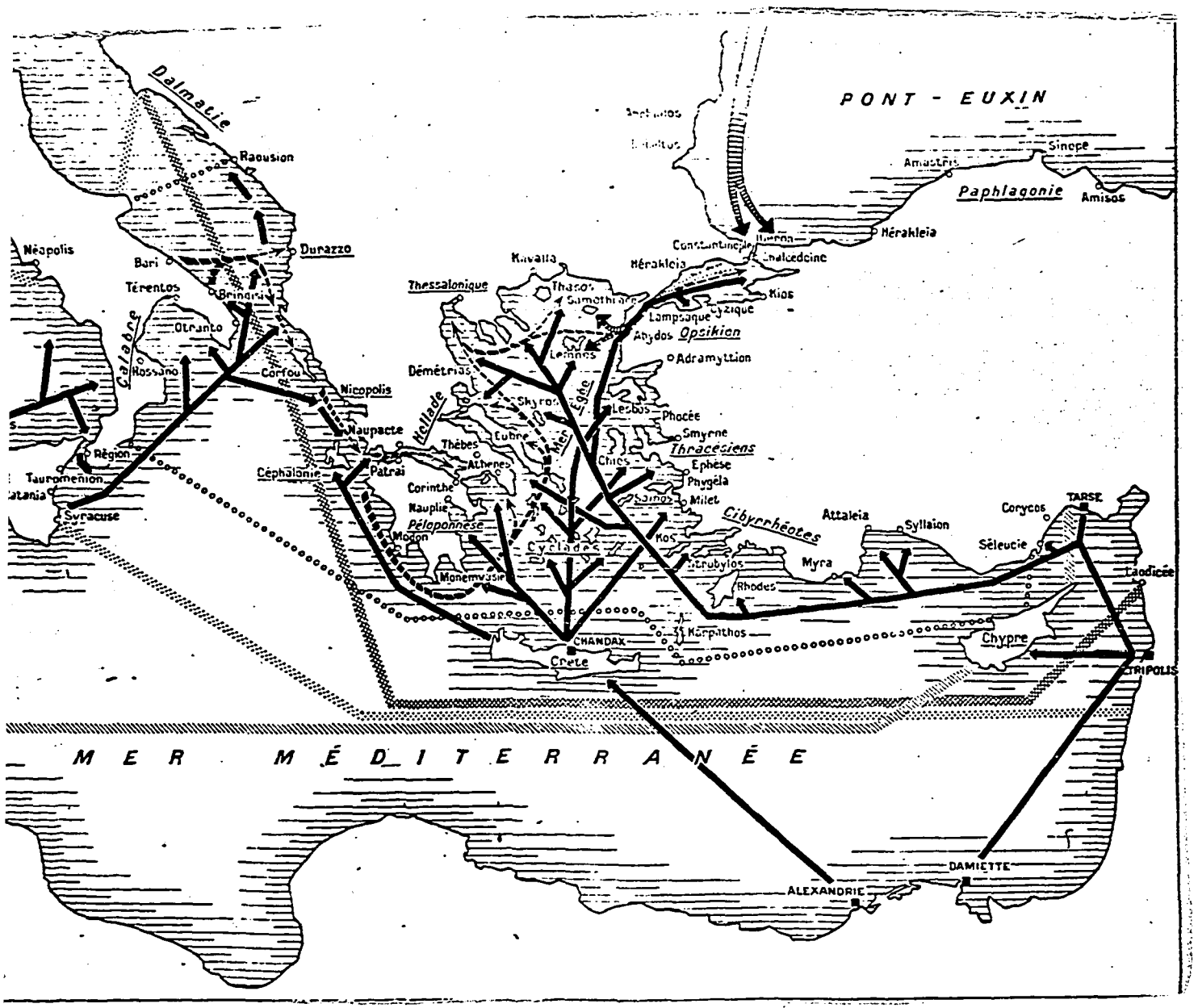

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that the previous relationships were restored.[94]

The chronology of this conquest is purely a matter of conjecture, for there is no record. All that is known is that Basil recovered the island for a period of seven years. When it was conquered is unknown. The most likely period was after the successful 873 campaign when there was a lull on both fronts. If this is so, the island was probably retaken by the Arabs in 880 or 881.[95] Although the conquest of Cyprus was short-lived, it did have an important immediate effect on the security of the high seas. According to a late source, the island of Crete, as a result, even paid tribute to Basil for a period of ten years (873-883).[96]

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[94]According to Dolley, op. cit., pp. 209ff., the occupation did not even take place under Basil but under his son, Leo VI, and lasted from 906-913. Opposed to this view is Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 50-54; Jenkins, Studies Presented to D. M. Robinson, II, 1006-14.

[95]On dating, Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 50-54, conjectures 874-876 for the conquest and 879-880 for its loss after the Syracusan disaster. Jenkins, Studies Presented to D. M. Robinson, II, 1006-14, does not attempt to solve the chronological problem but merely accepts Constantine's view as authentic.

[96]Phrantzes, 105$_{3-9}$ (... καὶ δειλιάσαντες ἠρέμησαν τοῦ λοιποῦ καιρόν τινα καὶ φόρους τῷ Βασιλεῖ Βασιλείῳ ἔταξαν δοῦναι. καιροῦ παρελθόντος ἐτῶν ὡσεὶ δέκα τὰ συνήθη αὐτῶν οἱ Βάρβαροι πάλιν οὐκ ἐπαυον πράττειν καὶ λῃΐζειν τὰς νήσους, καὶ τοὺς φόρους τοῖς Βασιλεῦσι κατὰ τὰς ὑποσχέσεις ἠθέτησαν καὶ οὐκ ἔπεμπον.) On the name of the author of this chronicle there is some dispute, but most scholars agree that it should be Sphrantzes, not Phrantzes. For literature on this subject, see V. Laurent, "Σφραντζῆς et non Φραντζῆς," B.Z., 44 (1951), 373-78; V. Laurent, "Sphrantzes et non Phrantzes a nouveau," R.E.B., 9 (1951), 170-71; D. A. Zakythinos, "Σφραντζῆς ὁ φιλήτης," E.E.B.S., 23 (1953), 657-59; R. J. Loernertz, "Etudes sur les chroniques

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In the years following the Tephrike campaign the imperial forces in the East concentrated primarily in consolidating their newly occupied position in this region. The internal and external problems which plagued the Abbasid Caliphate, such as the Zenji insurrection[97] and the breaking away of Egypt under the newly found Tulunid dynasty, certainly facilitated this.[98] Elsewhere along the southern section of their frontier the Byzantines were busy extending their offensive in the Taurus region in order to close off this area from Arab attack. Perhaps this was also in anticipation of a major offensive against the fortress city of Tarsus.[99] The major route to the city was the Cilician Gates, which is about seventy miles in length from the point where the ascent from the central plateau of Asia Minor begins, south

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brevès byzantines," Orientalia Christiana Periodica, 24 (1958), 162 (n. 2). More significant is the recent discovery of Loenertz, who has further shown that the larger chronicle (Chronicon Maius) should be distinguished from the Chronicon Minus, which begins with Sphrantzes' birth in 1401. The former, Loenertz argues, was really the compilation of Macarius Melissenus, Metropolitan of Monembasia in the sixteenth century. See, on this, R. J. Loenertz, "Autour du Chronicon maius attribué à Georges Phrantzès," in Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati (Citta del Vaticano, 1946), III, 273-311. Loenertz' view has now been generally accepted by the following: Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, p. 417 (n. 2); F. Dölger and A. M. Schneider, Byzanz (Bern, 1952), pp. 29-30; Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica, I, 284-85.

[97]Muir, op. cit., pp. 531-47. [98]Ibid., pp. 548-50.

[99]Tarsus was the key fortress of the Moslems in their border wars, commanding the southern entrance to the Cilician Gates. Ibn Hawqal (quoted by Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, p. 132) states that Tarsus was surrounded by a double stone wall and garrisoned by 100,000 horse soldiers. He adds that he saw here in 978 a great garrison made up for the most part of volunteers coming from all the provinces of Islam to aid in fighting against the Byzantines.

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of Tyana, to the point where the southern hills of the Taurus range merge with the Cilician plains.[100] Near the northern extremity of the pass was a peak on which stood the fortress of Lulon (Luluah), the key to the pass.[101] If the Byzantines held it, Arab effectiveness in invading Cappadocia could be reduced.[102] On the other hand, if the Arabs held it they could make raids at will into Byzantine territory. Lulon (Luluah) was therefore a critical fortress. When it was in the hands of the Byzantines it served as the extreme station for an early warning system which could flash the news of an impending invasion to the capital.[103] According to the sources it was done in the following manner. Beacons were flashed from Lulon first to Mt. Argaios, then to Isamos,

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[100] Anderson, "Road System," pp. 28-30; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 80-85; W. Ramsay, "Cilicia, Tarsus, and the Great Taurus Pass," Geographical Journal, 23 (1903), 337ff.

[101] On Lulon, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 353; Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, p. 139; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 42, 44-45, 47, 60, 68. The fortress was situated so as to command the pass between the Cilician Gates and Tyana. Near it was the bishopric of Faustinopolis, a city built by Marcus Aurelius (161-180) and named after the Empress Faustina, who died there. According to G. Weil, Geschichte der Khalifen (Mannheim, 1848), II, 160, it was taken by the Arabs under Harun ar-Rashid (786-806) in 805. From the route of various Arab raids it seems, however, that the fortress was under Arab control as early as 782. In the ninth century it changed hands frequently and was again lost during the reign of Michael III. Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 354, says it occurred between the years 863-867. I would, however, fix it in the year between the deaths of Caesar Bardas and Michael III; i.e., 866-867.

[102] For Arab raids by this route, see Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 80-92.

[103] According to the Vita Basilii, 197, Michael in one of his fits of lunacy ordered the signals to be stopped. This, however, is highly doubtful.

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Aigialos, Mamas, Kyrikos, Mokillas, Mt. St. Auxentios, and finally to the Great Palace.[104] According to Pseudo-Symeon, a simple plan for using the beacons to send as many as twelve different messages is said to have been contrived by Leo the Philosopher and adopted by the Emperor Theophilus (829-842). Two clocks were constructed which kept exactly the same time and were set together; one was placed in the palace, while the other was set in a fortress nearest to the Cilician border. Twelve occurrences, which were likely to happen and which were important to know, were selected. Then one of the twelve hours was assigned to each occurrence; these occurrences were written on the faces of both clocks. A signal made at 10 o' clock would indicate a raid; a signal made at 2 o'clock would indicate that hostilities had already begun; a 5 o'clock signal would signify a conflagration, etc. In this manner the commander of the frontier fortress would only have to await the selected hour and send his signal. As a consequence the capital would know exactly what was

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[104] The description of the beacons can be found in ibid., 197$_{15-21}$ (διὰ φανοῦ δηλοῦσιν τοῖς κατὰ τὸν Ἀργαῖον βουνόν, καὶ οἱ αὖθις τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ἰσάμον, καὶ οἱ τοῖς κατὰ τὸ Αἰγίλον, καὶ τοῦτο τοῖς κατὰ τὸν Μάμαντα πάλιν βουνόν. εἶτα τοῦτον ὁ κύριος διαδεχόμενος, καὶ αὖθις τοῦτον ὁ Μώκιλος, ἐκ τούτου δὲ ὁ τοῦ ἁγίου Αὐξεντίου βουνὸς τοῖς ἐν τῷ μεγάλῳ παλατίῳ κατὰ τὸ ἡλιακὸν τοῦ φάρου ἐπὶ τούτου διαταρίοις ἀφωρισμένοις ἐν βραχεῖ ἐποίει δὴ φανερά). Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 174, gives the same stations. They are also mentioned with some variations in De Ceremoniis, I, 491. For a more accurate description, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 352-53, who clarifies many of the points.

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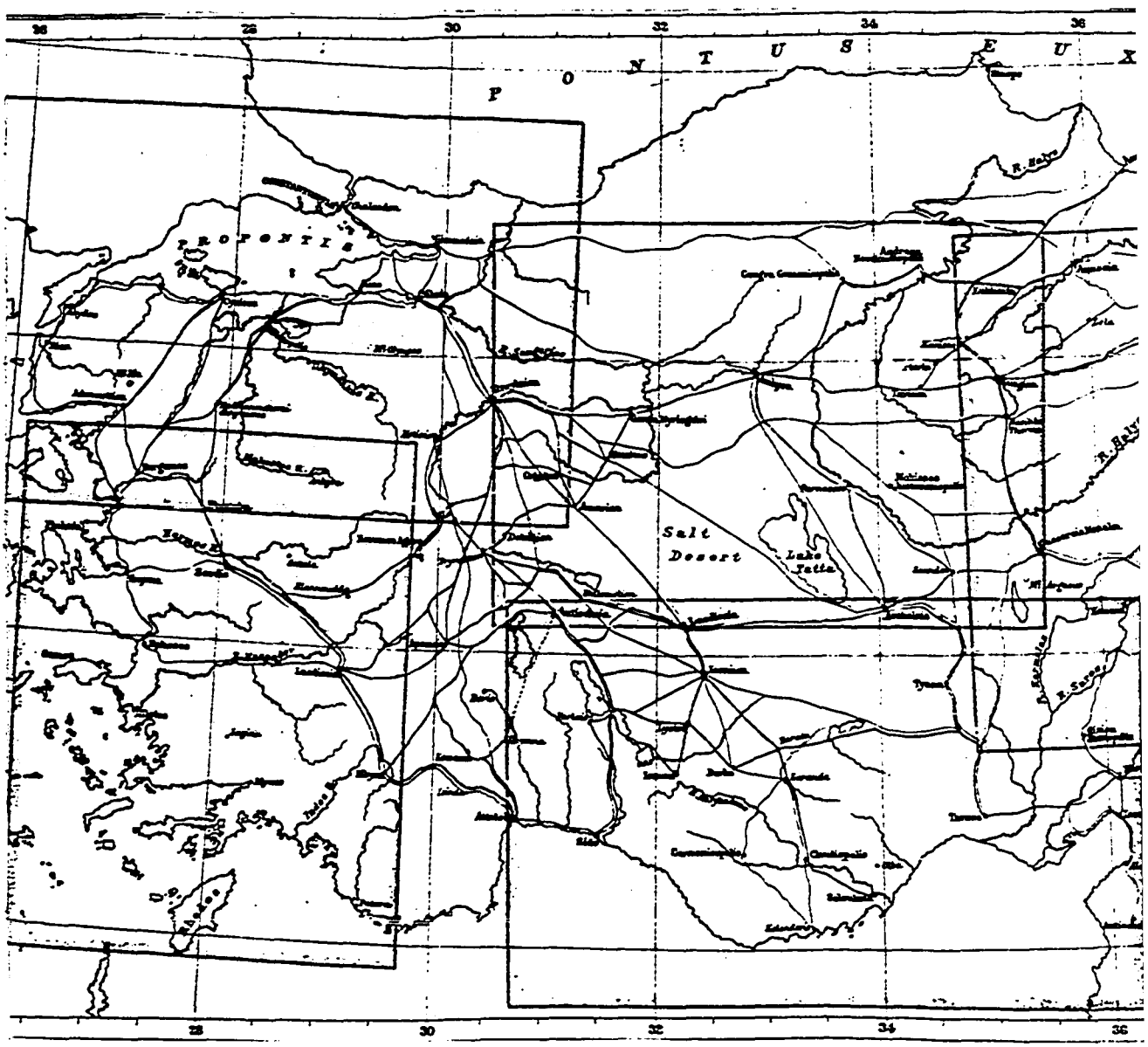

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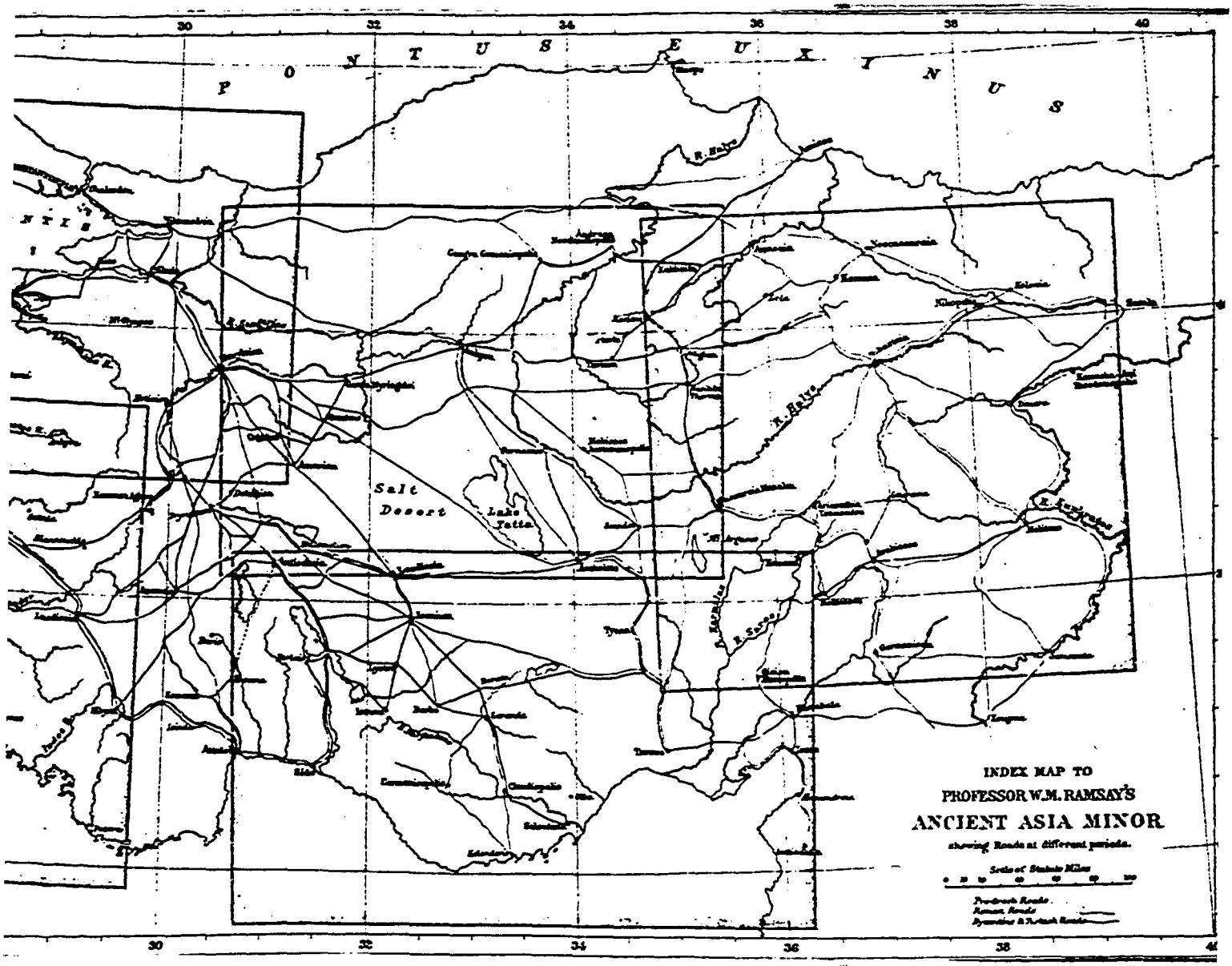

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happening on the frontier and what measures it must take.[105]

According to the Arab historian Tabarī, the Byzantines first captured Lulon in 873,[106] but it was promptly lost again. In 877, however, the Byzantines regained it for good.[107] According to the Arab historian Ibn al-Aṯīr (1239),[108] the fortress fell into Byzantine hands because of the unsatisfactory treatment which the Slavic garrison had been given by the Governor of Tarsus, Urhuz ibn Ulug ibn Tarhan, who withheld the pay of these troops. When their pay was not forthcoming, the Slavic garrison informed the inhabitants of Tarsus that they would hand over the fortress to the Byzantines unless their salaries were received.

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[105] Pseudo-Symeon, 681_{21-23}-692_{1-18} (ὡς ὡρολόγια ἐποίησεν δύο ἐξ ἴσου πάμνοντα ....).

[106] Tabarī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 7) dates this in the year 260 A.H. (27 October 873-15 October 874). This is repeated by the fifteenth-century ʿAinī, who copied Tabarī (ibid., p. 204).

[107] Ibn al-Aṯīr dates this in the year 263 A.H. (24 September 876-12 September 877) (ibid., pp. 135-36), but Ibn Saʿīd (died 1274 or 1286), ibid., pp. 200-201, dates it in 260 A.H. This confusion in chronology raises some serious doubts as to whether Lulon was taken once or twice. Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 62 (n. 2), is of the opinion that Tabari is confused and that there was merely one attack, for none of the other sources refer to a repeated capture of Lulon by Basil. The Vita Basilii, 277_{18-21}-278_{1-5}, mentions only one seizure, but Constantine would naturally hide an earlier failure. Since Tabarī is the earliest source on this matter I am inclined to accept both dates as authentic until additional proof is found to the contrary.

[108] The Slavic garrison led to Arab historians calling the fortress Hisn Sakaliba (the fortress of the Sclavonians). These may have been descendants of the Slavs who, according to Theophanes, 348, joined the Arabs in 664. In 691, an additional 20,000 deserted; ibid., p. 366.

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Realizing the urgency of this matter, the people of Tarsus collected 15,000 dinars among themselves in order to pay the garrison. However, they foolishly entrusted it to Tarkan, who pocketed it. The Slavic garrison then carried out its threat and handed the fortress over to the Byzantines. Tarhan was removed from his office by the Caliph Mutamid (870-892) and replaced by the ambitious Ahmad ibn Tulun, who had already extended his frontier from Egypt into Syria.[109] The damage, however, was irreparable.

The capture of Lulon was a great victory for the Byzantines. Simultaneously, Byzantine forces captured the important fortress of Melouos or Melos, which guarded an important pass from Cilicia into Lycaonia.[110] As in the previous campaigns, the captures of these points were hardly isolated incidents. On the contrary, they were part of Basil's master strategy to gain the key focal points on the road systems in order to subjugate the adjacent territory

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[109] Ibn al-Atir, 263 A.H. (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 135-36); Ibn Sa'id (ibid., pp. 200-201) dates it 260 A.H. and says that only 5,000 dinars were raised. Ibn Ḥaldūn (ibid., p. 259) dates it 263 A.H.; Sibt ibn al-Ǧauzī (ibid., p. 166) dates it 263 A.H.; Aini (ibid., p. 264) gives two dates, 260 and 263 A.H.; Abu'l-Maḥāsin (ibid., p. 270) dates it 260 A.H.

[110] Vita Basilii, 278_{6-7} (ἀφ' οὗ καὶ τὸ Μελοῦος κάστρον πρὸς αὐτὸν ἑκουσίως μετέθετο καὶ δεσπότην ἑαυτοῦ τὸν αὐτοκράτορα ἀνηγόρευσεν); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 213_{8-9} (προσέθετο δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ Μελοῦος, καὶ δεσπότην τὸν βασιλέα ἀνηγόρευεν.) For the location, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 355. He says it was on the pass from Laranda by Adrasos and Germanicopolis to Kelenderis (i.e., one of the passes leading from Lycaonia into Cilicia). He identifies it with Melos or Meloe, where the Empress Irene (780-802) defeated the Arabs in 781; Theophanes, 455.

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and curtail Arab movements. Perhaps one reason who this strategy was employed was the fact that the Arabs never effectively controlled this area but only held key strategic bases. Whoever held these bases, however, could impose his will upon the Akritoi in the region by a display of force.[111] The capture of Lulon and Melouos, therefore, was of strategic importance. The former closed to the emirs of Tarsus the use of major passes from Cilicia into Cappadocia while it gave Basil control over the main artery into Tarsus. Byzantine arms could now pass effectively from Caesareia Mazaka (a main rallying point) to the west of Mt. Argaios due south by Develе-Kara-Hissar to Podandos and through the Cilician Gates to Tarsus.[112] In addition, the route from Develе-Kara-Hissar to Tyana and then to Lulon to Podandos, where it passes through the Cilician Gates to Tarsus, was also open to them.[113]

On the other hand, the capture of Melouos or Melos closed the door between Cilicia and Lycaonia to the Arabs. In addition, it gave the Byzantines control over the following roads: (1) Laranda-Melouos-Adrasos-Germanicopolis-Lamos-Anemourion; (2) Laranda-Hierapolis-Claudiopolis, where the road forks to Kelenderis and also to Seleuceia; (3)

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[111]This can be seen from the general atmosphere, which is found in the epic Digenes Akrites.

[112]This was a more difficult route (Karydion) and was less important. See Anderson, "Road System," p. 30; Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 351.

[113]This was more important. See Anderson, "Road System," p. 30; Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 351.

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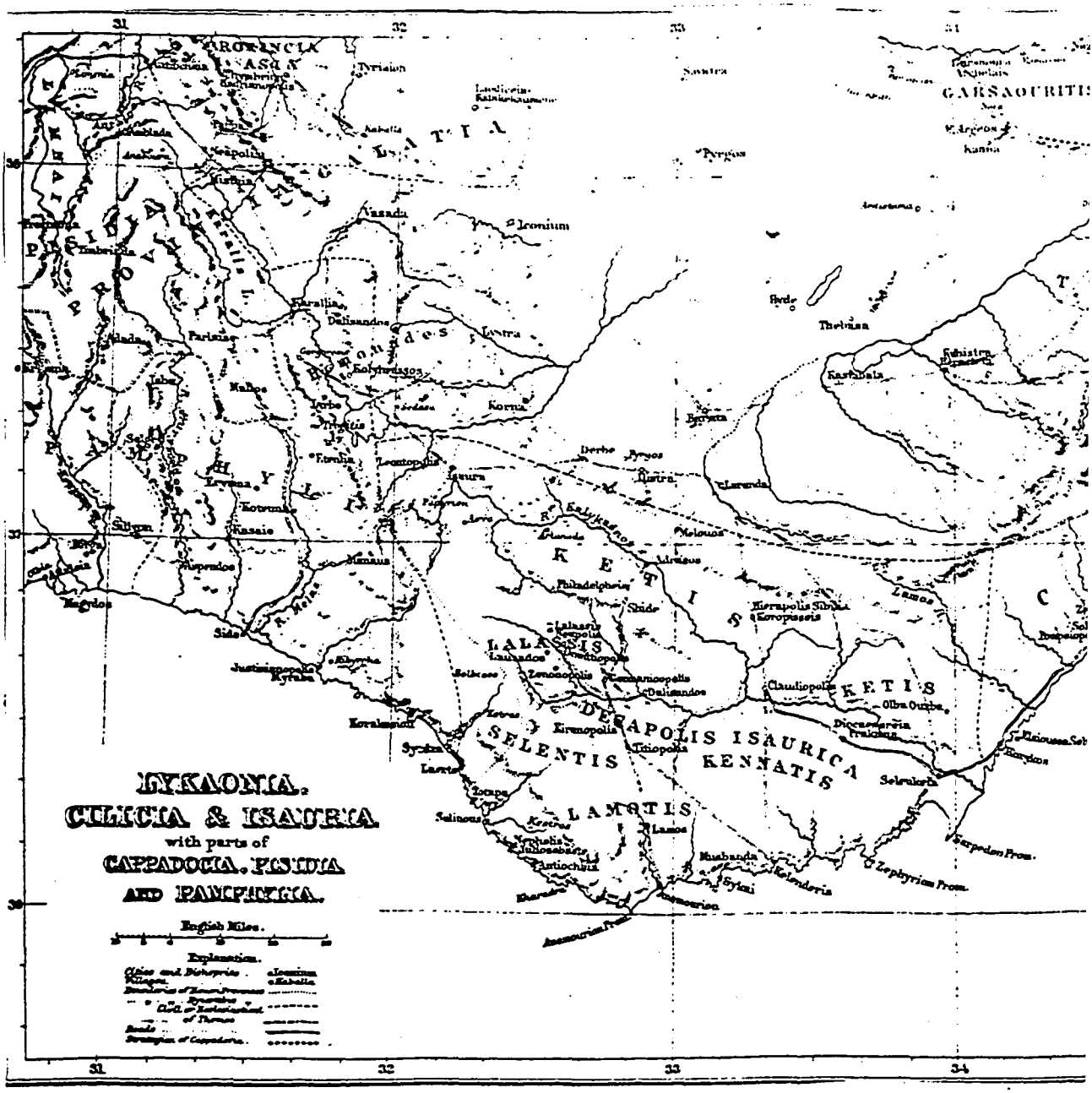

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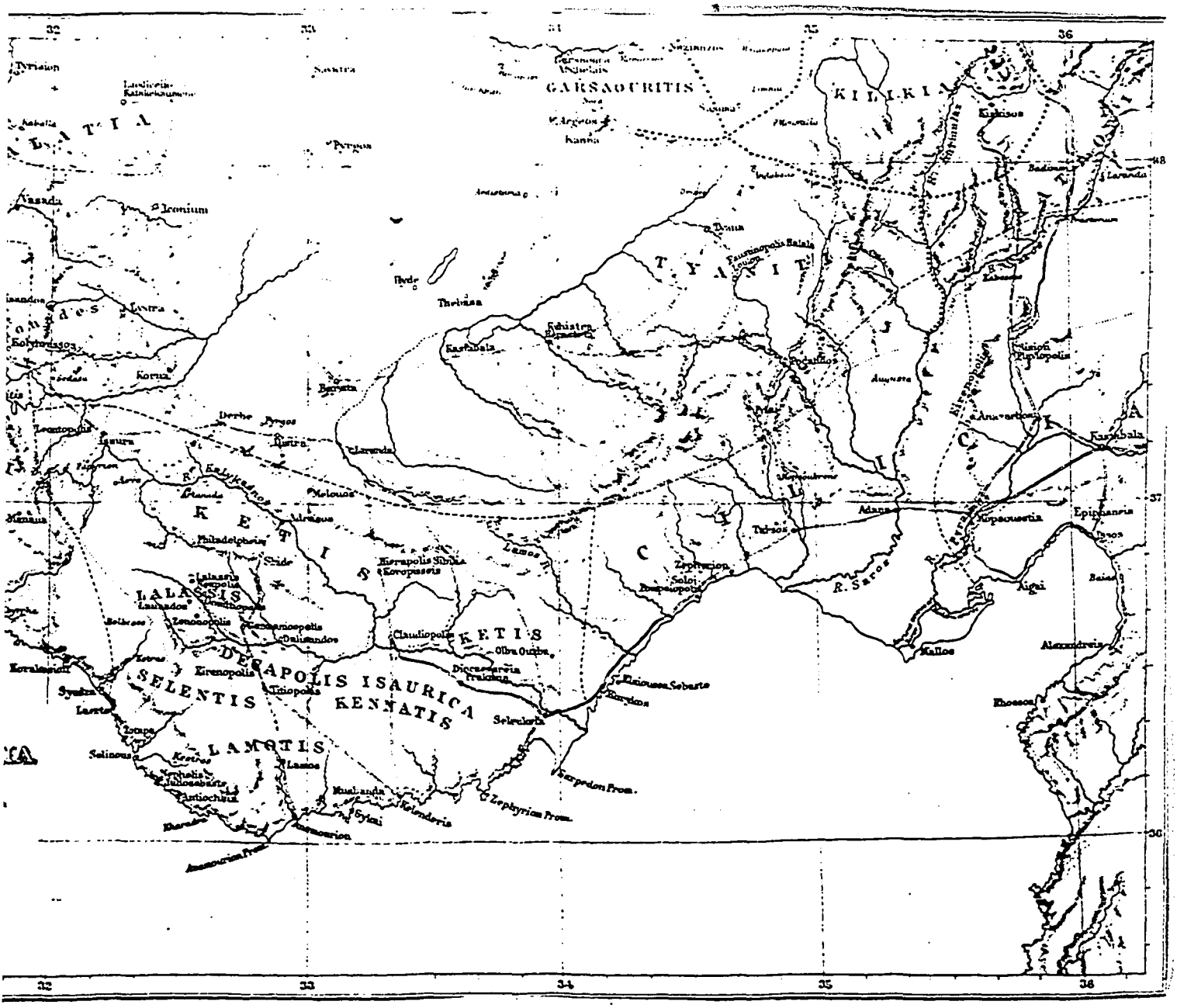
GARSAOURITIS
KILIKIA
TYANITIS
KETIS
LALASSIS
DERAPOLIS ISAURICA
SELENTIS
KENNATIS
LAMOTIS
R. Sarus
Tarsos
Adana
Mallos
Alexandreia
Epiphaneia
Kastabala
Anazarbos
Seleukeia
Korykos
Elaiussa Sebaste
Zephyrion
Soloi
Aigai
Rhosos
Issos
Myriandros
Amanikon Pylai
Amanikon Oros
Zephyrium Prom.
Sarpedon Prom.
Anemurion
Anemurion Prom.
Kelenderis
Nagidos
Korasion
Syedra
Trapezopolis
Isaura
Klaudiopolis
Olba Ourba
Diocaesarea
Philadelphia
Stratonikeia
Hyrkanis
Kanytelis
Korykos

Laranda-Seleuceia. These roads formed several triangles: (1) Laranda-Germanicopolis-Kelenderis; (2) Titiopolis-Anemourion-Kelenderis; (3) Lakanda-Claudiopolis-Seleuceia; (4) Claudiopolis-Kelenderis-Seleuceia.

The fall of Melouos also isolated the fortress of Kastabala, a Paulician fortress en route from Iconium through Barata to Tyana. Byzantine forces probably captured this after taking Melouos.[114] The capture of Kastabala now opened yet another route from Iconium (another rallying point) to Tyana. The securing of all these routes in 876-877 closed all of the major Taurus passes to the Arabs, cordoned off the entire Taurus area, and threatened the flank of Tarsus.[115]

How effectively the Byzantines were sealing off the frontiers to the Arabs can be seen by an Arab attack on Cappadocia in the following year. According to Tabari, Abd allah ibn Rasid ibn Ka'us, at the head of 4,000 men from the Syrian marches, attacked the fortifications of al-Khasin

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[114] Vita Basilii, 278_{7-9}, mentions Kastabala after the fall of Melouos. On the location of this town see Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 342. He identifies it as west of Kybistra and east of Laranda, but believes it was not this city. Instead he feels that this Kastabala was near Tephrike and Argaous. Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 63 (n. 4), agrees with him. To me it is only logical. The Byzantines were operating simultaneously at Lulon and Melouos; Kastabala is a connecting link between this area. If it was in Moslem hands or, as Constantine says, in the hands of the Paulicians, it must have been this town which was taken. Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 213_{10-11}, mentions the town of Kameia (Καμειαν).

[115] See map in Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 330. On the roads from Iconium, ibid., pp. 357-58.

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(Kasin) and al-Maskanīn, in southern Cappadocia.[116] The former was situated in the plain of Venasa, about Sasima and Malakopaia.[117] According to Leo the Deacon, Nicephorus Phocas traversed this area in 963 en route to the military road via Tyana and the Cilician Gates. There were a number of underground dwellings and churches, which led Leo to describe it as named originally Troglodytes (Τρωγλοδῦται).[118] Since the Cilician passes were closed off now, the invasion route was probably over one of the Anti-Taurus passes which

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[116]Tabarī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 7), 13 September 877-2 September 878. Bar Hebraeus, 148, says virtually the same:

> "And in the year 265 A.H. (878) the Rhômâyê took from the Arabs the fortress of Lûlwâh. And after one year Bar-Rashîd, the Captain of the host of the Arabs, collected 4,000 horsemen, and went to the country of the Rhômâyê. And the Patricians of the Rhômâyê, viz. him of Silâwkyâ, and him of Tûânâ, and him of Karshenâ, and others, surrounded the army of the Arabs. Then the Arabs, despairing of being able to save their lives, got down from their horses and hamstrung all of them. And they knelt down on their knees, and began to shoot their arrows into the Rhômâyê. But their shooting in no wise benefitted them, on the contrary, for the Rhômâyê rushed on the Arabs, and some of them they killed, and some of them they made prisoners, among these being Bar-Rashîd, their leader."

Also see Sibt ibn al-Ğauzī in Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 166.

[117]On the sites of the fortresses of Kasin and al-Maskanīn, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 356. Al-Maskanīn is probably Mistheia. See H. Grégoire, "La Carriere du Nicephorus Phocas," Προσφορὰ εἰς ἐπ. Κυριακίδη = Ἑλληνικὰ Παράρτημα IV (Thessalonika, 1953), p. 246 (n. 16); hereafter cited as Grégoire, "Carriere du N. Phocas." Mistheia's location is near the Cilician Gates. See Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 350.

[118]Leo the Deacon, Historia, ed. C. B. Hasii (Bonn, CSHB, 1828), 35. There is a German translation in Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber (Graz, 1961), X, 39. They probably entered the region by one of the passes and hoped to return via Podandos.

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were still open to the Arabs.[119] The most probable route, considering earlier Byzantine activity in this region, was the route from Tarsus to Sision (Flaviopolis) then over Mt. Taurus to the Saros River. From here they probably proceeded over the Anti-Taurus by Enderessi Yaila to Kiskissos. Then they continued to Ferakhtin on the Karmalos, and passing by Mt. Argaios attacked the fortresses of Kasin and al-Maskanin.[120] After their raid the Arabs returned via the route to Podandos. Here they were attacked by the Patricians from Seleuceia, Qadaidiya, Kaubab,[121] and Harsana.[122] In the battle which followed the Arabs suffered a fatal defeat, losing all but 500-600 men who were able to flee on horseback.[123] Even their leader was wounded and captured.[124]

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[119]On the routes, see Anderson, "Road System," pp. 29-30.

[120]For the routes to Sision (Sis), see ibid., p. 29. Ferakhtin was later captured by Basil (879).

[121]Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 69 (n. 3); Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 48 (n. 2). If it is , then it is Funduklu on the road from the Cilician Gates to Caesareia; Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 351.

[122]On Kurra or Qurra, see Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 48 (n. 3); Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, 69 (n. 4).

[123]Kaubab is a town not far from the Cilician pass. Ibn Khordadhbeh, p. 74, says it was on the road to the Cilician Gates.

[124]Kharshan or Harsana is a fortress in Cappadocia. At first it was just one of the bandi of the Armeniakon theme but later it gave its name to the Charsianon theme. See Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 72 (n. 1); Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 48; Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 249. Ramsay says Agrane and Siborn were also within this theme.

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Among the Byzantine commanders was the elder Nicephorus Phocas,[125] who had earlier distinguished himself in the Tephrikan campaign and was now strategos of Charsianon (Harsana).[126] The Byzantine commander-in-chief, however, must have been Andrew the Scythian.[127]

Later in that same year (878-879) the Byzantine forces followed up their success on the Podandos by marching with an army of 30,000 on Adana.[128] When they arrived at Musalla, they were met by an army under Urhuz, the Turk.[129] Again

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[125] Nicephorus Phocas was a native of Cappadocia, where his possessions were located. On the subject of the Phocades, see P. Charanis, "On the Ethnic Origins of the Emperor Nicephorus Phocas," εἰς μνήμην Κ. Ι. Ἀμάντου (Athens, 1960), pp. 42-45. He concludes that the Phocades were partly Greek and partly Armenian in origin judging from the names in their family. N. Adontz, "Les fonds historiques de l'épopée byzantine Digenes Akrites," B.Z., 29 (1929-1930), 212ff., states that they were Armenians. On the career of Nicephorus Phocas the Elder, see Grégoire, "Carrière du N. Phocas," pp. 232-54.

[126] Ibid., p. 243; Grégoire has shown that a valuable source for the career of N. Phocas is Georgius Continuatus in Vaticanus 153. Here it is found that Phocas was first μαγκλαβίτης, then Protostrator, then strategos of the Charsianon theme (οὗτος τοίνυν καὶ στρατηγὸς ἐν τῷ τοῦ Χαρσιανοῦ). See Grégoire, ibid., p. 250.

[127] In the Eastern campaign he was one of the most distinguished of the Byzantine commanders. Genesius, 115_{1-3}; Vita Basilii, 284_{9-10} (Ἀνδρέας ἐκεῖνος ὁ ἐκ ἔκυθῶν); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 16_{14-15}.

[128] Tabarī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 7-8); Ibn al-Atīr (ibid., p. 137); Ibn Ḫaldūn (ibid., p. 259); ʿAinī (ibid., p. 264).

[129] According to Vasiliev, ibid., p. 8 (n. 1), Musalla means praying place. Elsewhere (p. 71 [n. 1]), he says that it is in accord with the Greek town Μοσαλαιών. According to Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 356, it is on the road to Adana near Mopsuestia. This is the only logical place for it to be. Perhaps al-Musalla should read al-Massissa?

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the Byzantines were victorious and captured 400 Arabs, including their leader, and killed 1,480.[130] Only the lateness of the season (it was the month of gumada, 30 December 878-28 January 879) forced the Byzantines to return. The objectives of this attack are clear if they are considered in conjunction with the earlier campaigns against Lulon, Melos, etc. As the former victories closed the passes into Cappadocia and Lycaonia by the direct route, cordoning off Cilicia from the north and the west, so this campaign seemingly was directed at closing the Adana-Mopsuestia-Anazarbus-Sision route to the Arabs. As I have already conjectured, this was the probable route of the Arabs in their raid against Kasin and al-Maskanīn. Success here further isolated the fortress city of Tarsus, one of Byzantium's major foes at this time.

With these successes scored by his subordinates, among whom are to be distinguished Andrew the Scythian and Nicephorus Phocas, the Emperor Basil decided now to deliver a further blow to the Arabs by gaining control of the remaining passes across the Taurus and Anti-Taurus. In the spring of 879 Basil and his eldest son, Constantine, left the capital via the military road to Caesareia Mazaka.[131] Here he halted at Mt. Argaios to await the rallying of the other thematic forces. Then starting from Caesareia Mazaka Basil

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[130] Urhuz was later ransomed in that year. Tabari (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 8).

[131] Vita Basilii, 278_{15-16} (τὴν πρὸς τῷ ἀργαίᾳ καισάρειαν τὴν πρώτην τῶν); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 213_{13-14} (καππαδόκων).

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divided his forces into two parts, one detachment reconnoitering while he himself followed with the main force.[132] The vanguard captured the fortresses of Psilokastallon (Xylokastron)[133] and Paramokastallon (Phyrokastron).[134] The capture of these fortresses had an immediate effect, for Phalakron voluntarily surrendered.[135] Since these strongholds all lay between Caesareia Mazaka and the Karmalas (Zamanti Su) en route to the two passes near Sision (Sis) and the pass over the Anti-Taurus toward Kokusos, one can see that Basil's strategy was unchanged in this campaign. He was determined to secure all the passes as he advanced and to secure all the road systems.[136] In reaching the Karmalas (Onopniktes) Basil had met with little resistance. On crossing this river, the emir of Anabarzus, Abu Abdallah ibn Amru, fled and sought refuge in the fortress of Melitene.[137] Perhaps the flight of the emir together with his

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[132]This procedure was continually taken by Basil. It was also used by Alexander in his campaigns, except that Alexander usually went with the vanguard while either Parmenion or Craterus brought up the main force.

[133]Vita Basilii, 278_{22} (Ψιλοκάστελλον); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 213_{18} (Ξυλόκαστρον).

[134]Vita Basilii, 278_{23} (Παραμοκάστελλον); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 213_{19} (Φυρόκαστρον).

[135]Vita Basilii, 279_{2} (Φαλακροῦ); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 213_{21} (Φαλακροῦ).

[136]Phalakron = Fraktin; see Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 62. For the route, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 276.

[137]The name of the emir of Anabarzus is given by Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 213_{21-26} as ὁ δὲ τοῦ Ἄμβρωνος υἱὸς Ἀπαάβδελε, ὁ τῆς Ἀναβαρτης ἀμηρᾶς); Vita Basilii, 279_{3-4} (ὁ δὲ τοῦ Ἄμβρου υἱὸς Ἀπάβδελε Ἀναβάρβης ἀμέρας.)

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forces was due to the detachment of a portion of Basil's forces in this direction, but it is doubtful that they pursued him.[138] When they secured the road from Caesareia to Sision (Sis) via the Karmalas-Kiskissos and the Saros,[139] this detachment retraced its steps and joined Basil. The combined Byzantine force then marched on Kokussos, which was easily occupied. From here the army pressed on toward Germaniceia (Marash). According to the Vita Basilii, Basil took a difficult route through a thick forest along which he had to build a road. His army then crossed the Paradis river, passing through Kallipolis and Padasia en route to Germaniceia.[140] According to the Arab geographer Yakut, the fortress was strongly fortified with a ditch and a double wall. Yakût says that in addition it had an inner castle which was known as al-Marwani after Marwan II, the last Omayyad caliph.[141] For these reasons the Arabs remained behind their walls and refused to do battle. Apparently without adequate siege machinery, Basil could do little but devastate the environs. Perhaps it was at this time

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[138]Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 62, assumes they did. This, however, is inconceivable considering the lack of communications.

[139]See map in Ramsay, Historical Geography, opposite p. 266.

[140]Vita Basilii, 280_{15-21}, mentions the towns of Kallipolis (Καλλίπολιν) and Padasia (Παδασίαν); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 214_{10-11}.

[141]Quoted by Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, pp. 128-29. He also says that 200 men were garrisoned by Harun ar Rashid.

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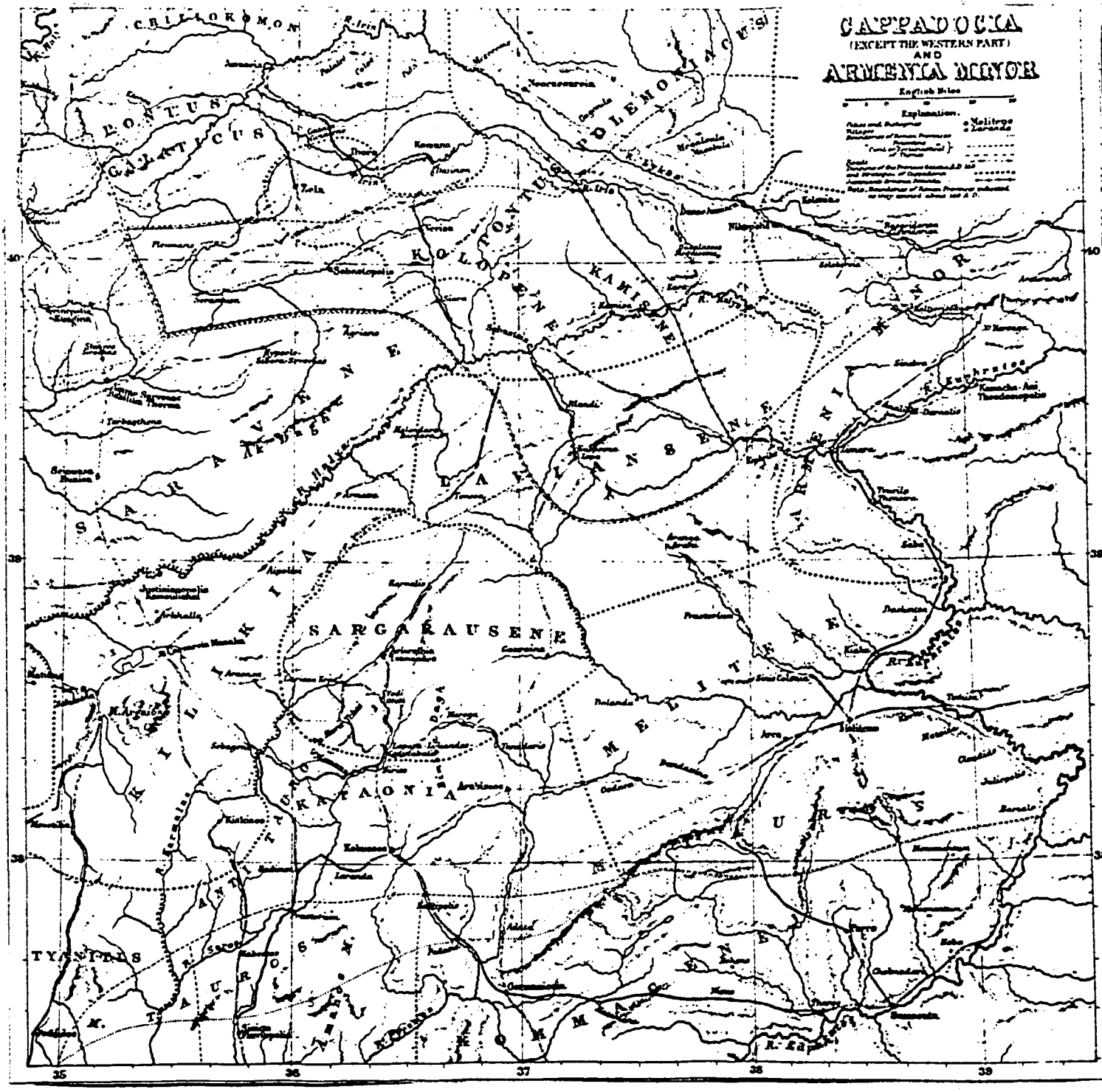

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that a detachment captured the following fortresses: Kaisos[142] or Katasana (Kasama); Rabam (Karba), Endelechone or Andala (Ardala,[143] and Eremosykaea (Eremosykea).[144] Tabarī corroborates this by stating that in the winter of 879-880 Byzantine troops made a raid into the province of Dijar Rabii (Rabia) in upper Mesopotamia,[145] penetrating as far as the fortress Tall Besma.[146] Here a fierce struggle ensued in which the Arabs lost 250 killed and wounded. The psychological effect of this raid was apparently noteworthy, for on hearing of this expedition the inhabitants of Mosul and Nisibis fled their homes and suffered from the cold.[147]

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[142] Καϊσοῦ = Kaisum; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 42-43, 62, 81.

[143] Ῥοβάμ; ibid., pp. 46, 62. Andala = Andal (Ardel); ibid., p. 62.

[144] Vita Basilii, 279$_{1-9}$ (Τῆς Καϊσοῦ ἤτοι Τῆς Καταςάμας καὶ Τῆς Ῥοβὰμ ἤτοι Τῆς Ενδελεχούης ἡ πόρθησις γέγονεν, ἅμα δὲ καὶ ἡ Τῆς Ἀνδάλου καὶ ἡ Τῆς οὕτω λεγομένης Ἐρημοσυ καίας); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 214$_{3-4}$ (Καταμαν ἐξεπόρθησε καὶ τὴν καρβὰν τὴν Ἀρδαλάν τε καὶ τὴν Ἐρημοσυκεάν.)

[145] According to Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, pp. 86-100, the Arabs called Upper Mesopotamia al Jazirah (the island), for its plains lay encompassed by the upper courses of the Tigris and Euphrates. The province was generally divided into three districts--Diyar Rabiah, Diyar Mudar, and Diyar Bakr, after the tribes of Rabiah, Mudar, and Bakr who had settled there under the Sassanids. The chief city of Diyar Rabiah was Mosul, on the western banks of the Tigris. According to Ibn Hawqal it was a city with excellent markets and fertile districts.

[146] On its location, see I. G. Taylor, "Journal of a Tour in Armenia, Kurdistan and Upper Mesopotamia," Journal of the Geographical Society, 38 (1868), 280-81.

[147] Tabarī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 8); Ibn al-Aṯīr (ibid., p. 137); Sibṭ ibn al-Ǧauzī (ibid., p. 166); Ibn Ḫaldūn (ibid., p. 259); ʿAinī (ibid., p. 264); Soyūṭī (ibid., p. 273).

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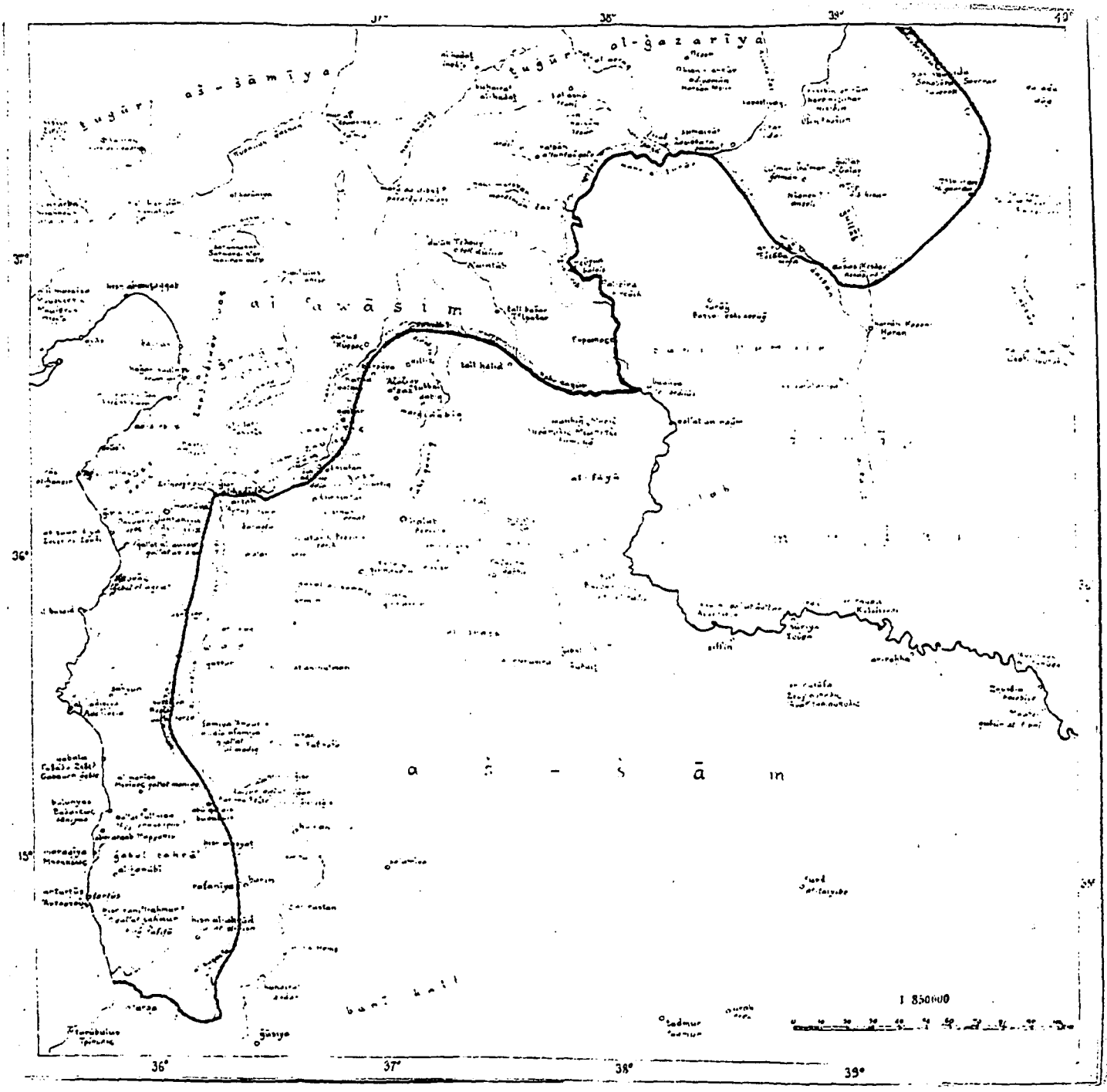

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Meanwhile Basil, with the main army, turned his attention on Adata (al-Hadath), an important fortress which guarded the pass from Germaniceia to Arabissos (al-Bustan).[148] Here, in vain again, Basil besieged this fortress which had a garrison of 2,000. After an initial setback he decided to isolate it by reducing the surrounding area. Perhaps it is at this time that he captured the fortress of Geronta.[149] Confident now that a renewed attack would bring him Adata, he resumed his siege but again achieved no results. According to the Vita Basilii, when Basil saw that his siege was failing he wanted to ascertain why the inhabitants were defying him. A man then informed him that according to a prediction the city would be taken by one of Basil's descendants, whose name would be Constantine. When Basil informed him that his son's name was Constantine, the man indicated to the emperor that it would be another Constantine.[150] Although this story is, to be sure, apocryphal, it is evidence against Vasiliev's view that this campaign took place in 879, prior to Constantine's death.[151]

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[148] Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, pp. 121-22, describes Adata from the Arab sources. On Basil's arrival, see Vita Basilii, 281_1; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 214_{16}.

[149] Vita Basilii, 281_5 (ὅπερ ἐκάλουν Γέροντα); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 214_{20}.

[150] Vita Basilii, 281_{1-23}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 215.

[151] Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 79, says that this campaign was part of a diversion after the failure of Melitene in 881-887. This I believe is wrong for the following reasons: (1) The interview shows that Constantine was still alive. (2) Pseudo-Symeon, 692_{15}, corroborates that Germaniceia and Constantine's death occurred in the same year. (3) If one adds to this Basil's movements, Basil's campaign does not make sense at all.

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With winter approaching and his siege making little progress, Basil withdrew his forces. On his return he had some additional successes, for a certain Arab chieftain, Abdelomel (Ἀβδελομέλ) submitted to him.[152] Elsewhere, too, Byzantine arms were successful, for when Basil passed by Mt. Argaios en route to Caesareia, he received news of the successes of his forces in Koloneia (Κολωνείας) and Lulon (Λούλου).[153] The latter is perhaps the Byzantine victory over a small Arab force under Sīmā, surnamed the Tall, who was defeated near Heracleia west of the Cilician Gates.[154]

At Medaon (Μηδαίῳ), which is east of Dorylaion on the Byzantine military road, Basil and his troops met with the prisoners whom they had captured.[155] Here the emperor rewarded his troops and dismissed them for the winter. He then returned to Constantinople, where he made a triumphal entry.[156]

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[152] Vita Basilii, 283_{8}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 215_{21}.

[153] Vita Basilii, 283_{16}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 216_{2}.

[154] Tabarī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 8).

[155] Vita Basilii, 283_{16-23}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 216_{2-5}. Among the prisoners were Kurds, which indicates that the raid into the region of Mosul occurred at this time. (Tall Basma has many Kurds in this region.) On the location of Medaon, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 239; he says it is eighteen miles from Dorylaion.

[156] Vita Basilii, 284_{1-5}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 216_{7-11}.

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Regardless of some setbacks on this campaign, one can see that Basil never departed from his original objective--to secure all of the passes over the Taurus and Anti-Taurus. Since this expedition furthered this goal by gaining control over the passes leading to Sisson (Sis) as well as those between Kokussos and Germaniceia, it must be viewed as a success. To be sure the Arabs could still penetrate through Byzantine lines, but they could no longer inflict a humiliating blow like that of Amorion in 838.

While Basil may have been overjoyed by his successes in 879, the end of the year brought him great sorrow, for his eldest son, Constantine, his favorite, died.[157] This, together with the loss of Syracuse in 878, must have shaken Basil's spirit, and his personal direction of the Eastern offense was not seen for several years. In this interval, however, the Arabs could do little but lick their wounds and take some precautionary measures.[158]

In 881[159] a change occurred. Encouraged perhaps by Nazar's victories at sea, Basil decided to further weaken the Eastern Arabs by attacking Melitene again. Despite his

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[157] Pseudo-Symeon, 692_{15}.

[158] This can be seen in an alliance between Melitene, Germaniceia, and Adata which is recorded by all the Arab sources. Tabarī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 8-9); al-Atīr (ibid., p. 138); ʿAini (ibid., p. 265).

[159] Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 78, dates this 882. Since 268 A.H. began on the first of April, 881, I see no reason why Basil did not march in 881.

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earlier successes, this fortress together with Samosata,[160] Adata, Germaniceia, and Tarsus was still in Arab hands. The latter fortresses, however, were to a degree held in check because Basil's earlier campaigns had secured most of the major road systems in eastern Asia Minor. Therefore Basil prepared an offensive against Melitene with the objective of capturing this fortress and then using it as a springboard for the elimination of the other fortresses. The Arabs anticipated just such an attack and took some appropriate measure in the interval to prevent their systematic isolation, agreeing to come to one another's assistance.

In the spring of 881 Basil set out from the capital via the military road to Caesareia where he undoubtedly rendezvoused with his thematic forces. From here he took, perhaps, the road over the plains to Arasaxa, crossing the Karmalas River to Larissa and Herpa and then following the aforementioned stream to Tzamandos. Then he proceeded over the hills eastward to Gurun, via Daranda (Taranta, Dalanda) to Melitene.[161] Anticipating an attack, the fortress city of Melitene was well prepared and actively assisted by her neighboring allies, Germaniceia and Adata.[162] The siege of

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[160] This fortress may have been under Byzantine control. The Byzantines had raided it earlier and captured it. Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 58, 62, believes this at any rate.

[161] On the description of the roads from Caesareia, see Anderson, "Road System," pp. 22-28.

[162] Tabarī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 8-9); al-Atīr (ibid., p. 138); 'Aini (ibid., p. 265). All say that in the siege Melitene was assisted by troops from Germaniceia and Adata.

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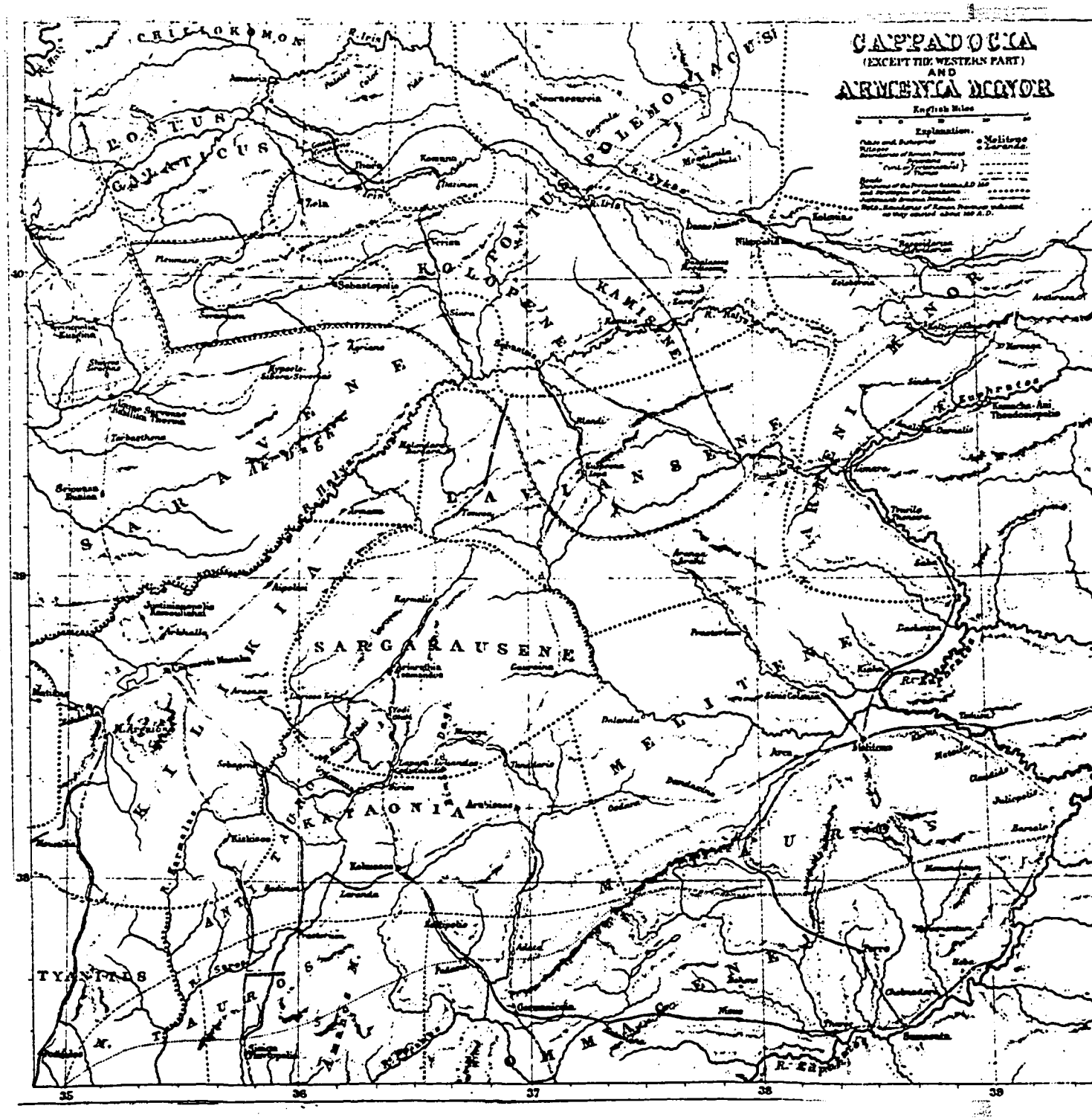

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the fortress did not progress, and Basil was forced to withdraw to al-S.ri (Sirica) on the upper reaches of the Saros River.[163] Perhaps the emperor was surprised by reinforcements from Adata and Germaniceia. This seems to me the only logical reason for beating such a hasty retreat. Nevertheless, this attempt illustrates again Basil's objectives in the East. Unfortunately, this was the last campaign in which the emperor personally participated. In the years which followed he delegated all responsibility to others.

In the following season the Arabs realized the gravity of their position and sought to break out of the stranglehold which the Byzantines were gradually tightening each year. In 882, Ibn Tulun sent his subordinate Halaf al-Fargani with the troops from the Syrian marches to attack Byzantine territory. With Byzantine preoccupation again centered on Western affairs, the Arabs inflicted a stunning defeat on the Byzantines and retraced their steps with a great booty equivalent to forty dinars per man.[164]

This attack from Tarsus caused grave consternation in the capital but led to the wrong solutions. Enemies of Andrew the Scythian, the Domestic of the Schools, used this raid to bring charges against this able general which led to his dismissal. According to some sources he was accused

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[163] Al-S.ri is probably Sirica. On the location of this city, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 266 (map); Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze (map).

[164] Tabarī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 9) dates this 268 A.H.; Ibn Haldūn (ibid., p. 259) dates it 268 A.H. also and so does Sibt ibn al-Ğauzī (ibid., p. 166). All say that 10,000 Byzantines were killed.

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of cowardice in not taking Tarsus on an earlier expedition (Podandos).[165] However, according to Symeon the Logothete, he was dismissed because of an accusation made by the imperial favorite of Basil, Theodore Santabarenos, that Andrew was taking the side of the future emperor, Leo the Wise, in a dispute with his father.[166]

Be that as it may, Andrew was replaced by the inexperienced Styppiotes, a man who probably owed his position more to politics than ability. Overconfident of being able to deal with Tarsus, Styppiotes prepared to deliver what he thought would be the coup de grace on this fortress city. Little did he know that the Arabs had found in the eunuch, Yazaman, an able leader.[167] Throughout the summer of 883 preparations were carefully laid by Styppiotes, who was assisted by the thematic forces of Anatolika, Cappadocia, and Qurra.[168] In September, 883, he left Caesareia en route

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[165] Vita Basilii, 286; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 217.

[166] Georgius Continuatus, 847,25 (Καταγορηθεὶς δὲ Ἀνδρεάς δομέστικος τῶν σχολῶν παρὰ Σαντα βαρηνοῦ ὡς τὰ Δέοντος φρονῶν διεδέχθη παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως.)

[167] The career of Yazaman begins at this time, in my opinion, for his name is not mentioned by the Arab sources before this. Contrary is Grégoire, "Carriere du N. Phocas," p. 244 (n. 15). Grégoire's thesis is that there is a great similarity between the Adana campaign (878-879) and that described by Leo's Tactica and the De Velitatione Bellica. In the latter, a certain Apoulfer the eunuch is mentioned. Although he identifies this person with Yazaman, there is no proof that he belongs to this campaign. I believe that it was a later campaign. One of Grégoire's points also is that five patricians took part at Adana, proof that the two campaigns are the same, but there were five also in 883.

[168] Tabarī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, p. 9); Ibn al-Aṯīr (ibid., p. 139); Sibt ibn al-Ǧauzī (ibid., p. 167); Ibn Haldūn (ibid., p. 259); ʿAinī (ibid., p. 265); Soyūṭī (ibid., p. 273).

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to the Tarsus, but his overconfidence caused him to depart from the customary precautions which were essential in this type of fighting.[169] When he was about six miles from Tarsus he carelessly rested his troops at Bāb-Qalamya for the night. The eunuch Yazaman, realizing his advantage, promptly attacked during the night and won an overwhelming victory (September 14, 883).[170] According to Tabari, Styppiotes and the strategoi of Anatolika and Cappadocia together with 7,000 were killed. Only the Patrician of Qurra escaped. Yazaman also captured a vast booty which included seven gold and silver crosses, of which one was of great size and studded with precious jewels; an enormous number of gold- and silver-ornamented swords; about 10,000 brocaded standards; many vessels; brocaded silken stuff with designs, and sable shawls; 15,000 horses and mules and almost as many saddles; and an enormous amount of supplies--arms and tents.[171]

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[169] De Velitatione Bellica, ed. C. B. Hasii (Bonn, CSHB, 1828), 202 (ὅπερ παρὰ τῶν Ταρσιτῶν πολλάκις γέγονε. καὶ ἐπακολουθοῦντος αὐτοῖς τοῦ Τουρμάρχου, καὶ μὴ ἀκριβῶς τοὺς ἔμπροσθεν σκοπούντος φύλακας καὶ τοὺς τόπους τοὺς δυναμένους λαὸν ἀποκρύπτειν, ἀπροόπτως τῇ ἑνὸς ἁρπαγῇ τούτων περιπεπτώκασι.)

[170] The Byzantine sources say that the battle took place at Chrysoboullon (χρυσόβουλλον); Vita Basilii, 287₇; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 217. On Chrysoboullon in the province of Kalamia, see W. Tomaschek, Zur Historischen Topographie von Kleinasier im Mittelalter (Vienna, 1891), p. 67 (Calamia [Qalamia] or Iqlimia). On the date of this battle, see Tabarī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 9); Sibt ibn al-Ǧauzī (ibid., p. 167). The exact date is given in Tabarī as Tuesday, the 7th, in the month of Rabi 1 (which equals 14 September 883).

[171] The Arab sources vary in their estimates of Byzantine losses. Tabarī says 7,000, while Sibt ibn al-Ǧauzī says 70,000. Both agree that the Byzantine forces had 100,000; undoubtedly this is a gross exaggeration. According to the Arabs, however, the leader of the expedition is called Andrew. Apparently they did not know he had been replaced.

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The effect of this defeat resounded in the court and Basil promptly reinstated Andrew the Scythian.[172] In the next few years, however, the principal defender of the Byzantine frontier against the determined Yazaman was Nicephorus Phocas, a man who had distinguished himself in this border war earlier and whose brilliance now would bring him a further promotion as generalissimo of all the western forces. Unfortunately the chronology of these campaigns is very vague. Basically Nicephorus matched blow for blow with Yazaman during the next two years. According to both the Tactica of Leo and the De Velitatione Bellica, when the Arabs under Yazaman moved north to attack Byzantine territory, Nicephorus counterattacked by laying waste the Arab lands. On one occasion when the Arabs moved into Cappadocia (Καππαδοκία),[173] Nicephorus crossed into Cilicia by the Maurion Pass (διὰ τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς τοῦ Μαυριανοῦ) in the region of Adana. From here he advanced to the sea, ravaging the area. When the Arabs heard of this movement, Nicephorus outwitted them by promptly returning with his booty via the Karydion Pass (διὰ τῆς ὁδοῦ τοῦ καρυδίου λεγομενης), since he knew that the enemy would be expecting him by the former route.[174]

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[172] Georgius Continuatus, 847$_{14}$ (καὶ πάλιν προχειρίζεται Ἀνδρέας παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως δομέστικος)

[173] On the location, see Ramsay, Historical Geography, p. 332. (It is in the Anatolikon theme.) For the account of this, see Leo the Wise, Tactica, 933C.

[174] Ibid., 800A.

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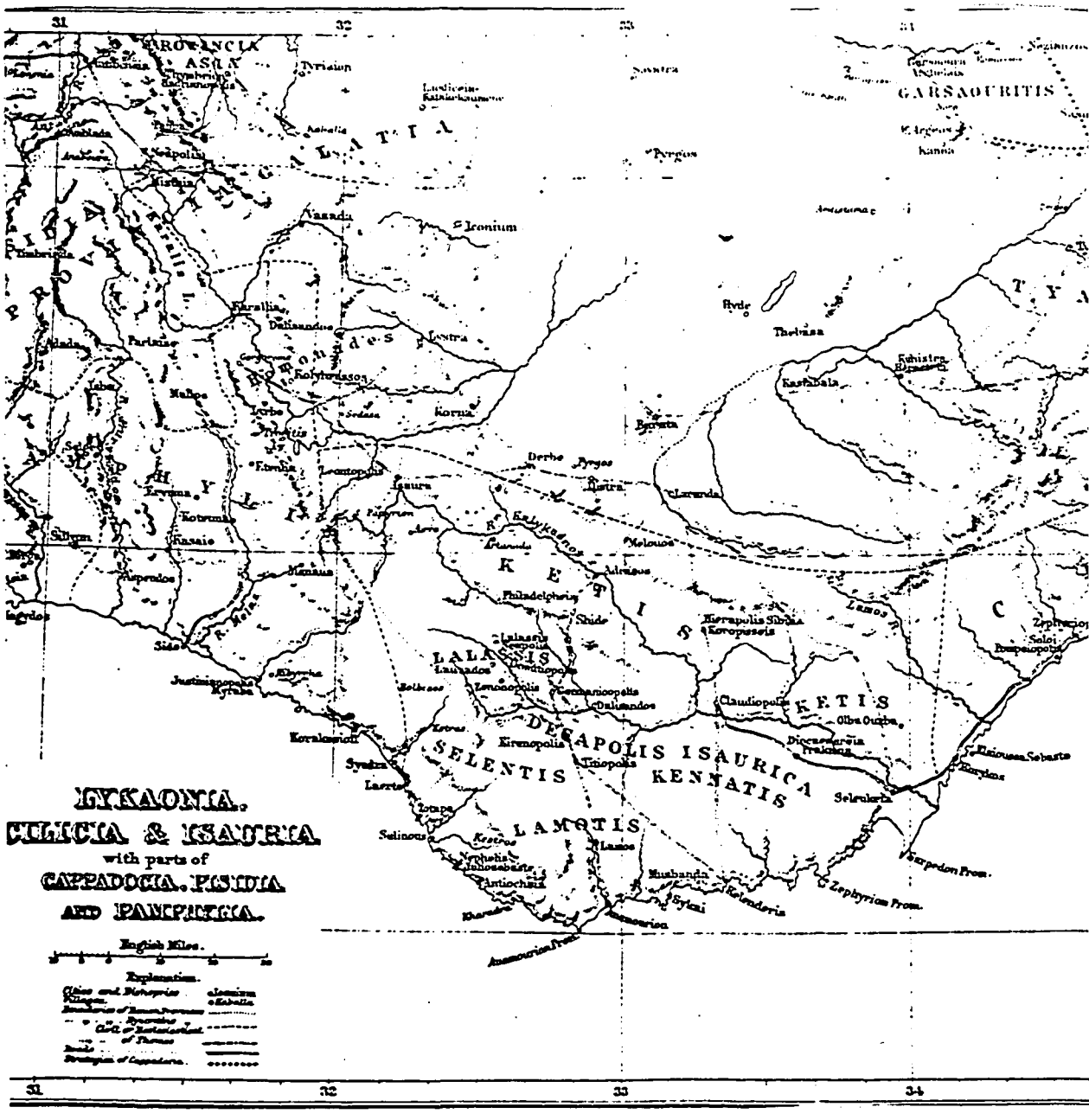

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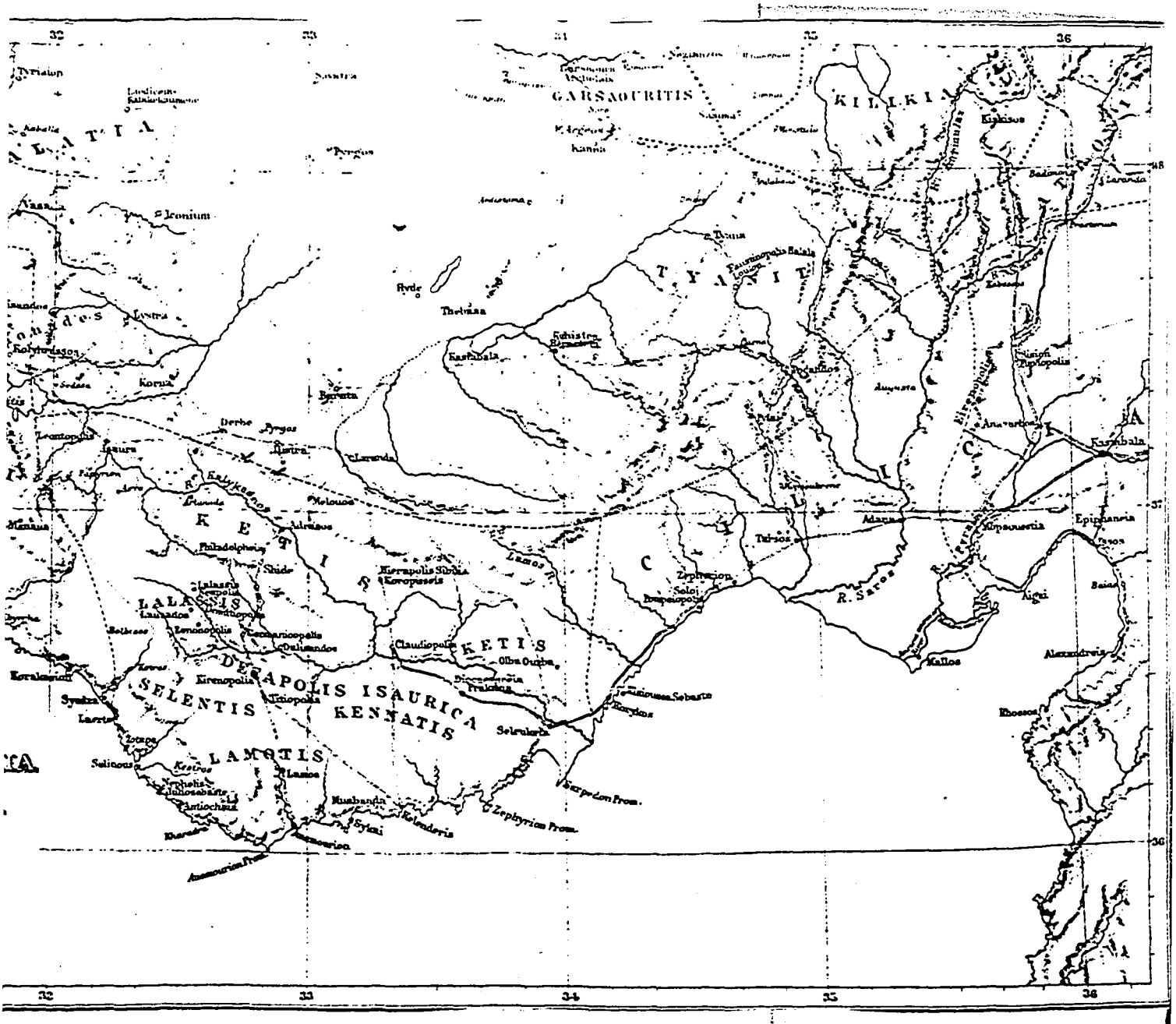

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On another occasion Nicephorus again eluded Yazaman and penetrated into Syria, carrying away many prisoners.[175] As a result of these raids the two sides probably exchanged prisoners, as was customary at the beginning of each year. Tabari, for example, mentions just such a ransoming in the year 885-886.[176] The successes of Nicephorus, however, soon brought him further recognition, and he was transferred to the western theater. With the absence of Nicephorus, Yazaman had a free hand to attack the Byzantine empire at will.[177] But his repeated raids on the empire by land yielded little. In his frustration Yazaman turned to the sea. Perhaps it is to this period that we must date an attack on the Euripus in Greece by a certain Ἐσμὰν, the emir of Tarsus, which is mentioned by the Vita Basilii.[178]

From the detailed description of Basil's offensive in the East one can clearly see that his objective was to gain control of all the major road systems in eastern Asia

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[175] Ibid.

[176] These exchanges were made at the spring of each year. Tabari (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 9) records the ransoming of prisoners of the locality of Satidame on February 2, 884.

[177] Tabarī (ibid., p. 10); Ibn al-Aṯīr (ibid., p. 139); and ʿAinī (ibid., p. 265) mention a raid by land in 885.

[178] This is my opinion. Since Yazaman is not heard of prior to 883, it could not have occurred earlier. Since he was preoccupied with Nicephorus (883-885), I cannot see how he could have raided until after Nicephorus had departed. Contrary to this view is Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 49, who dates it 874 or so; Grégoire, "Carriere du N. Phocas," believes it to be before 880; p. 248.

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Minor. From this plan he never deviated.[179] In the Tephrike campaign, for example, Basil achieved this by the capture of the Paulician capital, Tephrike. Here Basil continued the work which the Amorians had accomplished in the Pontic region. His campaigns in the south (i.e., in the Taurus region) were basically the same--to seal off Lycaonia and Cappadocia from attack. In the above two areas the emperor was completely successful. In his campaigns against Adata, Germaniceia, and Melitene his objective was unchanged also; but here he was only partially successful, in that he gained control of the passes and roads but could neither take these fortresses nor advance the frontier to the western bank of the Euphrates. Nevertheless, in view of all his achievements in the East, Basil's wars must be considered successful. Without his work the drive of the later Macedonians would have been considerably delayed.

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[179]Vasiliev's view (Vizentija i Araby, II, 68, is that Basil had no objective after the fall of Syracuse in 878. Consequently his campaigns were just haphazard drives. This seems to me unsupported by the evidence.

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CHAPTER VI

THE WESTERN THEATER: THE DALMATIAN AND ITALIAN CAMPAIGNS

The situation which faced the Emperor Basil in the West was quite different from that which had faced him in the East, where he had found the Moslems on the defensive. Here it was the Arabs who were on the offensive, endangering what remained of Byzantine possessions in the West, and threatening to encircle the empire.[1]

The beginnings of this offensive lay in their earlier history. It stemmed from two factors: (1) the successful conquest of North Africa by 700; (2) the subsequent development of Moslem sea power in the West. The subjugation of North Africa was a slow process; it began with the conquest of the interior and culminated in the capture of Carthage by Hasan in 698.[2] The principal reason for the protraction of this offensive (it took over half a century) was Byzantine

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[1]The danger which threatened the empire from the West was realized by few emperors. Primarily, most emperors concentrated on Eastern affairs. Two exceptions to this rule were Constans II (641-668) and Basil I (867-886), who both had a Western policy. On this, see Bury, "Naval Policy," pp. 21-31; Ahrweiler, Byzance et la Mer, pp. 17-28.

[2]The Arab advance on the North African continent proceeded at first in the interior due to Byzantine sea power. This can be seen by the establishment of their base at Kairouan in the interior. Even later they established their new capital at Tunis not at Carthage to be free of Byzantine attacks. On the capture of Carthage by Hasan, who drove off the fleet of John the Patrician, see Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire, II, 353-54.

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sea power, which had effectively dominated the Mediterranean.[3] Even in 698, it was only Byzantine preoccupation with the new dangers which had arisen in the Balkans, and the civil strife during Justinian II's reign that prevented the recovery of Carthage.[4]

The loss of Carthage was momentous, for in subjugating this city the Arabs took the first step toward securing the south shore of the Mediterranean basin. Established in their new home, the Arabs found themselves limited by their naval impotence. Consequently, the Caliph Abd al-Malik (685-705) ordered his governor, Musa, to set up a naval base in Africa, and sent him 1,000 Coptic shipbuilders.[5] In a short time, a North African naval arsenal emerged to complement the existing ones in Egypt and Syria.[6] The effect of this development

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[3]This can be seen on two early occasions in the 680's. An Arab commander, Oqba, who ignored the factor of Byzantine sea power and tried to reach the Atlantic, suffered a defeat at the hands of the Byzantines and a Berber coalition under Kosaila. To revenge this defeat and the loss of Kairouan, the Caliph Abd al-Malik sent Zohair ibn Quais to recover lost ground. Although he was successful initially, he too was forced to retreat, for a Byzantine naval expedition attacked his rear. See, on this, A. Lewis, Naval Power and Trade in the Mediterranean A.D. 500 to 1100 (Princeton, 1951), p. 62.

[4]According to Bury, "Naval Policy," p. 25, the imperial government could have saved Africa if they had used their sea power more effectively: "Their great error lay in not keeping a permanent and substantial war fleet in Africa, with Sicily to fall back on." It is likely, however, that the Bulgar danger and civil strife during Justinian's reign were a bigger factor. When Justinian regained the throne in 705 he was preoccupied with revenge.

[5]A. Lewis, op. cit., p. 64.

[6]According to Bakrî (quoted by Fahmy, op. cit., pp. 69-70), Hassân ibn al-Numân was entrusted with the building of the arsenal in Africa:

"When the Greeks sent a naval expedition against the defenceless Moslems stationed at Tûnis, many were killed or

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was immediate. In 700, the Arabs captured the tiny but strategic island of Pantelleria which dominated the straits between Africa and Sicily.[7] In 704, raids were made on Sicily and Sardinia.[8] The Baleric islands were hit in 708 and Sardinia again in 710.[9] Sea power also enabled Tariq ibn Ziyad, a general of Musa, to cross the Straits of Gibraltar and begin the conquest of Spain.[10]

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taken captive. Hassân therefore sent forty leading Arabs to the Caliph and wrote him a letter describing the calamities which had befallen the Moslems. He, meanwhile, waited at Tûnis for an answer. Two followers of the prophet, Anas ibn Mâlik and Zayd ibn Thâbit, who were at the court, informed the Moslems that those stationed at Râdis [Tûnis], for one day would surely enter heaven. They advised the Caliph to send help to the luckless city in case of any further attack, and assured him that God would reward him for his action, as Tûnis was considered a holy city whose people were blessed. It was in fact a garrison town for the protection of Qayrawân against any assault from Macedonia. The Caliph immediately sent to his brother Abd al-Azîz ibn Marwân, Governor of Egypt, requesting him to dispatch a thousand Copts, with their families, and to provide for them until they reached Tûnis. He also wrote to Hassân authorising him to build an arsenal as an aid to the firm establishment of Moslem power. Berbers in the locality were to be employed for the transport of timber required for raiding the Greek coasts. Thus the safety of Qayrawân would be assured. These orders were carried out. The arsenal was completed and connected with the sea in the harbour of Râdis."

[7]The island was taken in 700, but apparently retaken by the Byzantines for the Moslems had to recapture it in 835. It is located about sixty miles from Sicily and forty miles from the mainland. See Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 63; Bury, "Naval Policy," p. 25.

[8]A. Lewis, op. cit., p. 65. [9]Ibid., p. 65.

[10]Brockelmann, History of the Islamic People, pp. 83-84; Muir, op. cit., pp. 356-63; Hitti, op. cit., pp. 493-97. At first Tariq had only the ships of Count Julian, Governor of Ceuta, who joined the Arabs, but later Musa supplemented these.

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Initially the appearance of the North African Arabs as a sea power had little effect on Byzantine supremacy in the Mediterranean, for the raids of the North Africans seemed insignificant compared to the colossal victories of the Byzantines in the East.[11] Twice Moslem fleets in this quarter were destroyed in attacks on Constantinople--once in 672-679[12] and then again in 717-718.[13] Later in 747, the Byzantines destroyed 997 of 1,000 Moslem ships off the coast of Africa.[14] The latter victory not only destroyed Omayyad sea power but assured Byzantium of supremacy on the "high seas" for another fifty years.[15]

There were four key factors which had enabled the Byzantines to triumph at sea and to maintain their primacy for so long. First, Byzantium had a definite geographical advantage: all of the principal Moslem naval centers lay in

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[11]The great naval victories of the Byzantines in the East, however, came only after some initial setbacks.

[12]On the Arab defeat in 672-679, see Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire, II, 310-11; M. Canard, "Les Expeditions des Arabes contre Constantinople dans l'histoire et dans la legende," Journal Asiatique, 207 (1925-1926), 77-80.

[13]On the siege of 717-718, see Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire, II, 401-05; Canard, op. cit., pp. 80-102; R. Guilland, "L'expedition de Maslama contre Constantinople," in Al Macchriq (Beyrouth, 1933), pp. 89-112.

[14]In 747 the Cibyrrhaeot fleet defeated 1,000 Arab dromons. Only three ships escaped. Theophanes, 424_{4-6}. See, also, Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire, II, 406 (he dates it 746).

[15]This can be seen by the decline of the Egyptian navy, for instance, until the time of the Fatimids. The Syrian fleet was crippled also, for it did not ravage Crete and Cyprus until 790. See Brooks, E.H.R., 15, 745-46.

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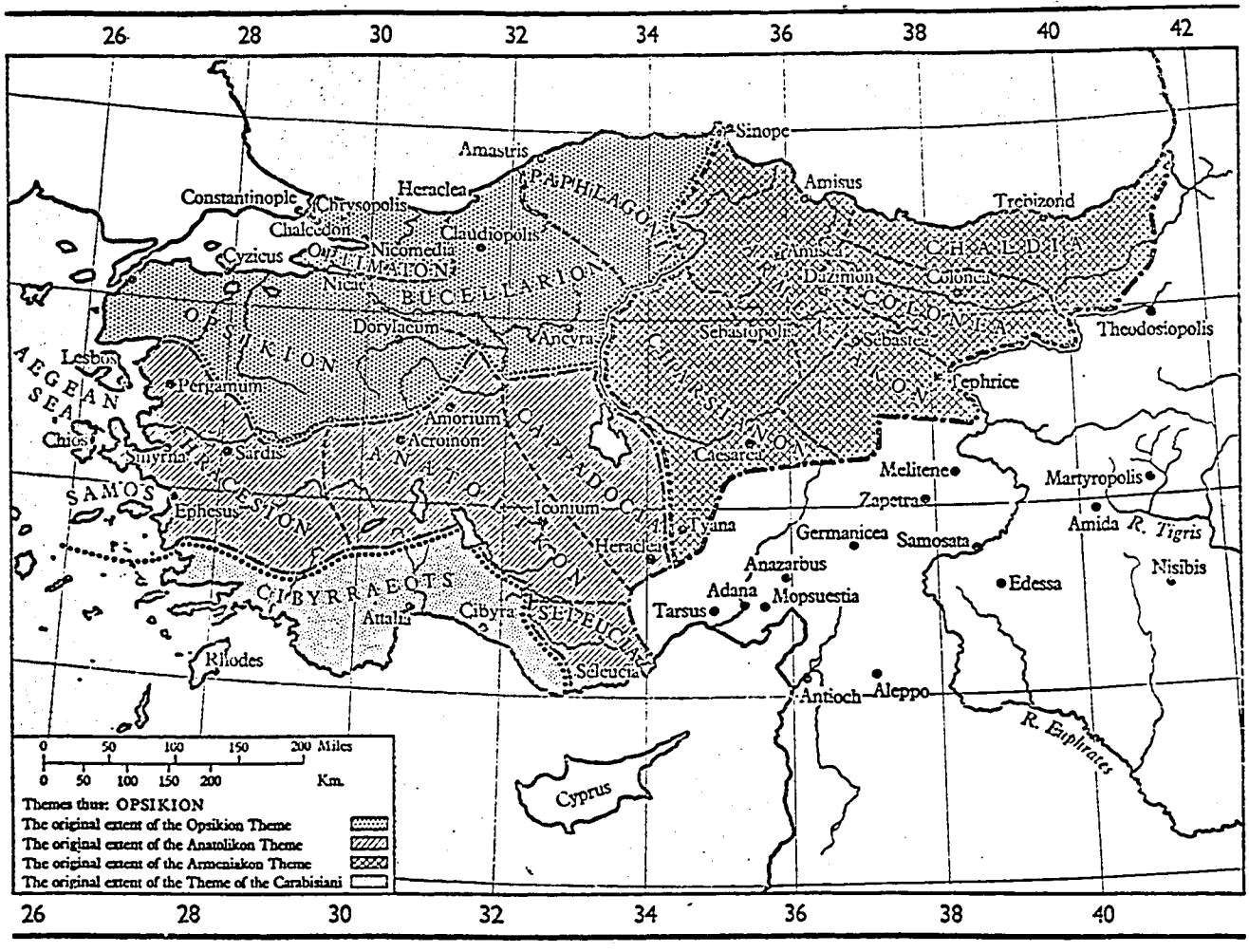

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unprotected areas open to naval access.[16] On the other hand, Constantinople was ideally located, for the Aegean islands formed a protective belt to insure the security of the imperial fleets and naval establishments. Second, Byzantium won its naval struggle with the Arabs by a superior weapon, namely, Greek fire, which was ultimately responsible for the above victories.[17] From all indications, this weapon was a

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[16]This can be seen by the protective canal which was built to guard Tunis in order to give some security to her naval arsenals, shipbuilding, and anchorage of her fleets. On this subject, see Fahmy, op. cit., pp. 51-74.

[17]On Greek fire, see Chapter V. In the De administrando imperio, 68-69$_{73-103}$, Constantine tells what answer should be given to any who ask for Greek fire:

> "Similar care and thought you shall take in the matter of liquid fire which is discharged through tubes, so that if any shall ever venture to demand this too, as they have often made demands of us also, you may rebut and dismiss them in words like these: 'This too was revealed and taught by God through an angel to the great and holy Constantine, the first Christian emperor, and considering this too he received great charges from the same angel, as we are assured by the faithful witness of our fathers and grandfathers, that it should be manufactured among the Christians only and in the city ruled by them, and nowhere else at all, nor should it be sent nor taught to any other nation whatsoever. And so, for the confirmation of this among those who should come after him, this great emperor caused curses to be inscribed on the holy table of the church of God, that he who should dare to give of this fire to another nation should neither be called a Christian, nor to be held worthy of any rank or office; and if he should be the holder of one such, he should be expelled therefrom and be anathematized and made an example forever and ever, whether he were emperor, or patriarch, or any other man whatever, either ruler or subject, who should seek to transgress this commandment. And he adjured all who had the zeal and fear of God to be prompt to make away with him who attempted to do this, as a common enemy and a transgressor of this great dommandment and to dismiss him to a death most hateful and cruel.'"

For the prohibition of Greek fire to enemies, see also the sixty-third novel of Leo the Wise, ed. Noailles-Dain (Paris, 1944), pp. 231-33. One of the vital ingredients of Greek

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heavily guarded secret and at the disposal of the imperial fleet alone.[18] Third, the empire had access to plentiful supplies of the resources--ship timber, naval stores, and iron--which were essential to the construction of her dromons.[19]

It was these battleships which enabled her to continue her mastery of the seas. According to the Emperor Leo the Wise's (886-912) Tactika, the dromon was the Byzantine ship par excellence. It consisted of two banks of oars, one superimposed above the other. Each bank had twenty-five seats across with two rowers on each, one to port and one to starboard--100 men, rowers, or soldiers in all.[20] Leo adds that larger ones could be built with as many as 200 rowers or with fifty at the lower oars and the rest above.[21] Smaller ships, called galleys, with one bank of oars were

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fire, petroleum, is mentioned by Constantine, De administrando imperio, 284-86$_{494-511}$, as found at Tamatarcha in Zichia, in the hinterland of Papagia and in two places in America on the eastern frontier.

[18]In 698 and 727, when the provincial thematic fleets sailed against the capital, they did not have this weapon but the imperial fleet did. See Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire, II, 438.

[19]A. Lewis, op. cit., p. 72, says that the Byzantines had more of these essential resources, but compare Fahmy, op. cit., pp. 75-85.

[20]Leo the Wise, Tactika, 992-93$_{7-8}$ (Ἕκαστος δὲ τῶν δρομώνων εὐμήκης ἔστω, καὶ σύμμετρος, ἔχων μὲν τὰς λεγομένας ἐλασίας δύο, τήν τε κάτω καὶ τὴν ἄνω. ἑκάστη δὲ ἐχέτω ζυγοὺς τὸ ἐλάχιστον πέντε καὶ εἴκοσι, ἐν οἷς οἱ κωπηλάται καθεσθήσονται. Ὡς εἶναι ζυγοὺς τοὺς ἅπαντας κάτω μὲν εἴκοσι καὶ πέντε, ἄνω δὲ ὁμοίως εἴκοσι καὶ πέντε, ὁμοῦ πεντήκοντα.

[21]Ibid., 993$_{9}$.

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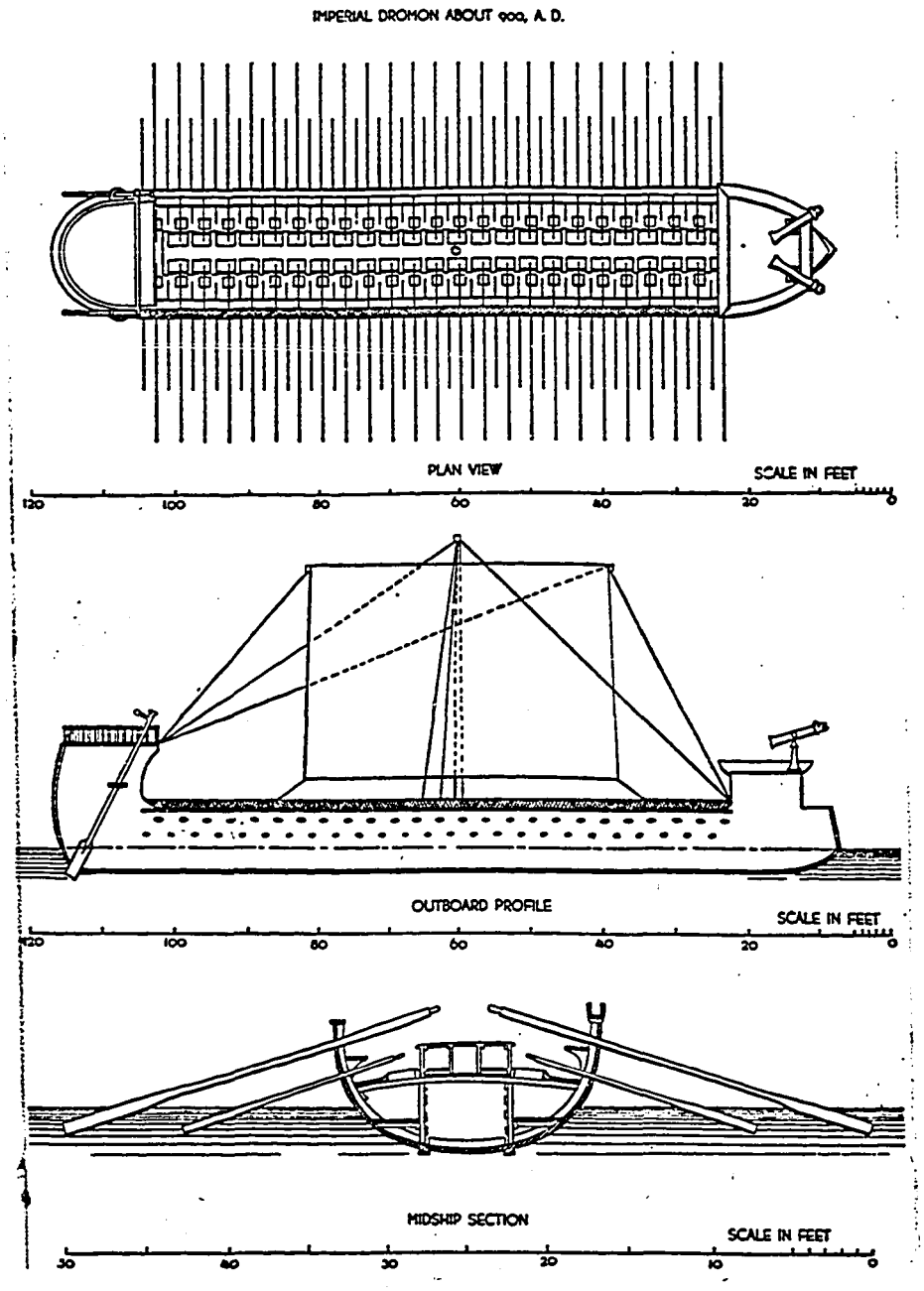
IMPERIAL DROMON ABOUT 900, A. D.
PLAN VIEW
SCALE IN FEET
120 100 80 60 40 20 0
OUTBOARD PROFILE
SCALE IN FEET
120 100 80 60 40 20 0
MIDSHIP SECTION
SCALE IN FEET
30 40 30 20 10 0

–RECONSTRUCTION OF BYZANTINE DROMON (PAMPHYLIAN TYPE)

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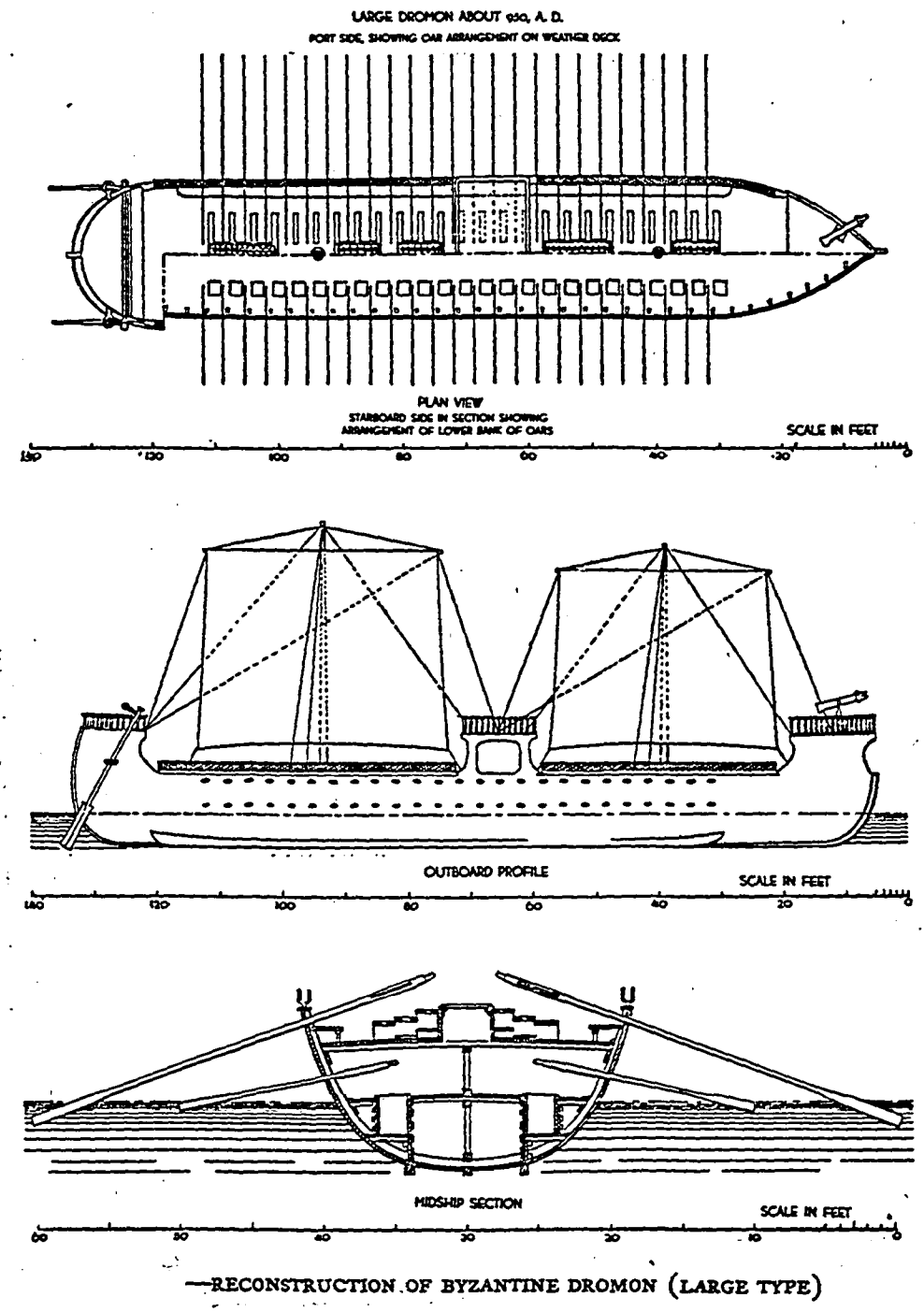
LARGE DROMON ABOUT 950, A. D.
PORT SIDE, SHOWING OAR ARRANGEMENT ON WEATHER DECK
PLAN VIEW
STARBOARD SIDE IN SECTION SHOWING
ARRANGEMENT OF LOWER BANK OF OARS
SCALE IN FEET
160 120 100 80 60 40 20 0
OUTBOARD PROFILE
SCALE IN FEET
140 120 100 80 60 40 20 0
MIDSHIP SECTION
SCALE IN FEET
60 50 40 30 20 10 0

—RECONSTRUCTION OF BYZANTINE DROMON (LARGE TYPE)

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also built, but they were used primarily for patrol reconnaissance, and other duties requiring speed.[22] For weapons the dromons were fitted with a tube (τὸν σίφωνα) at the bow which could hurl Greek fire at the enemy.[23] On the larger dromons there were wooden castles amidship in which soldiers were stationed to throw heavy stones or heavy pointed pieces of iron.[24] Fourth, the Byzantines possessed a superior organization in the theme system which provided an efficient yet inexpensive method of defense. In the early eighth century, Byzantium's naval strength was organized in the following manner. It consisted of a standing navy composed of one imperial and five thematic fleets.[25] Of these, four were stationed in the East and two in the West. In the East the naval center was at the capital, where the imperial fleet was stationed.[26] Before the Emperor Leo III's

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[22] Ibid., 993$_{10}$ (καὶ ἔτι δὲ κατασκευάσεις δρόμωνας ἐλάττους δρομικωτάτους, οἵονει γαλαίας ἢ μονήρεις λεγομένους, ταχινοὺς καὶ ἐλαφροὺς, οἵοπερ χρήσῃ ἐν ταῖς βίγλαις καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις ταχιναῖς χρείαις.)

[23] Ibid., 992$_{6}$ (ἐχέτω δὲ πάντως τὸν σίφωνα κατὰ τὴν πρῷραν ἔμπροσθεν χαλκῷ ἠμφιεσμένον, ὡς ἔθος, δι' οὗ τὸ ἐσκευασμένων πῦρ κατὰ τῶν ἐναντίων ἀκοντίσοι.)

[24] Ibid., 992$_{7}$.

[25] On this subject, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 108-10; Ahrweiler, Byzance et la Mer, pp. 45-73.

[26] The fleet at Constantinople was always under the command of a Drungarius of the Fleet (ὁ δρουγγάριος τοῦ πλοίμου). Bury, I.A.S., p. 109, believes that he existed as a subordinate to the strategos of the Karabisians as early as the seventh century, even though he is not mentioned in the eighth century. Ahrweiler, Byzance et la Mer, p. 74, believes, on the contrary, that he was created at the beginning

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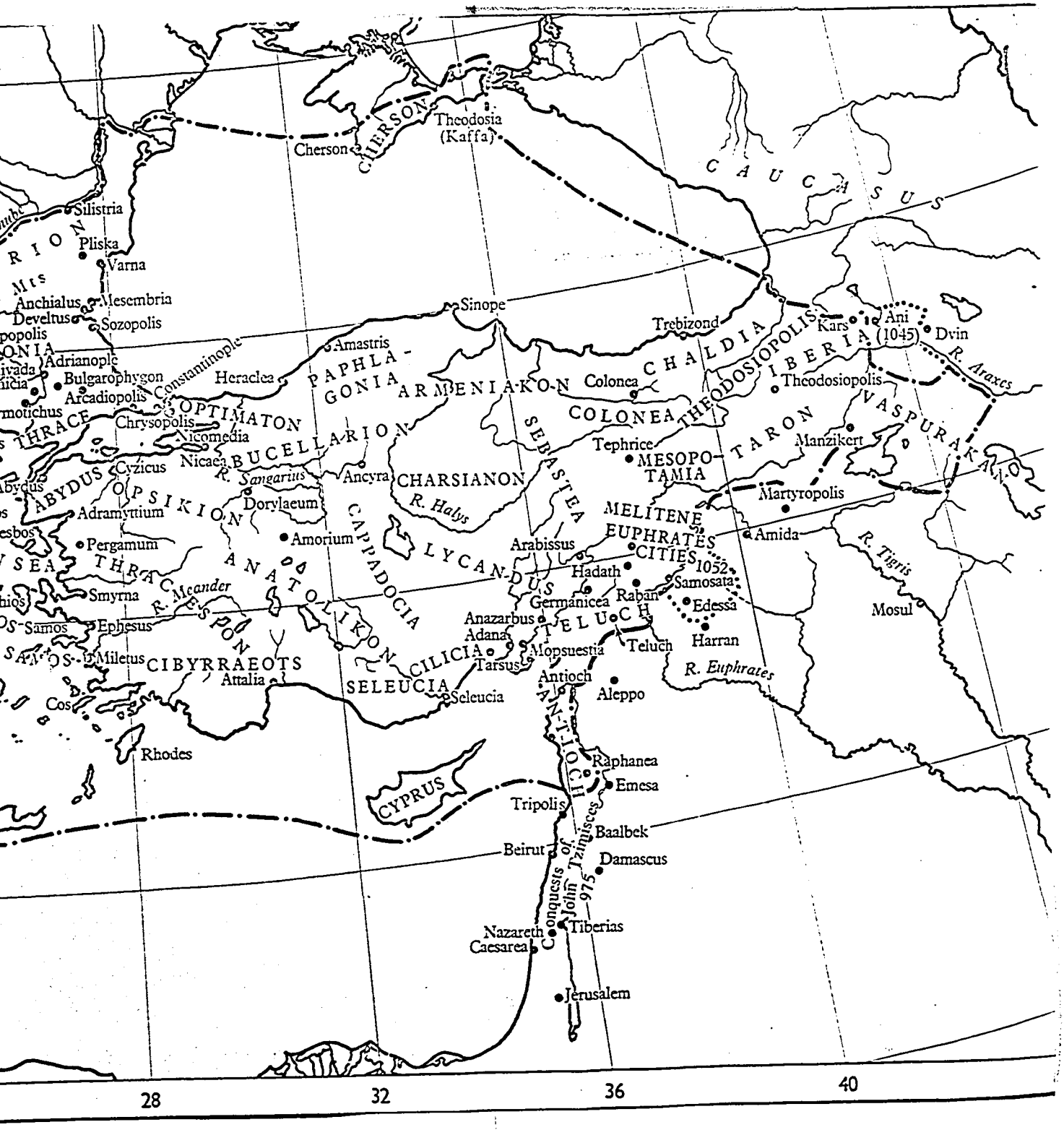

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reforms, the navy was under the supreme command of a Lord High Admiral called the Strategos of the Karabisians (στρατηγὸς τῶν καραβισιάνων). Under his command was the Drungarius of the Cibyrrhaeots.[27] Under Leo III this great command was abolished and subdivided, the Drungarius of the Cibyrrhaeots being raised to the rank of strategos.[28] The other three provincial fleets were known as the ὁ θεματικὸς στόλος and consisted at this time of the Hellas, the Cibyrrhaeots, and the Aegean Sea (αἰγαῖον πέλαγος).[29] Each of these was based in definite territorial naval districts. The Cibyrrhaeots consisted of the southern coast of Asia Minor, while the latter was composed of the islands of the Cyclades and the Dodecanese.[30] In the West there were similarly two thematic fleets--those of Sicily and the Exarchate of Ravenna.[31] It may be that Africa had

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of the ninth century either by Michael II (820-824) or by Theophilus (829-842). See also on this, R. Guilland, "Le Drongaire de la flotte, le Grand drongaire de la flotte, de Duc de la flotte, le Mégaduc," B.Z., 44 (1951), 217-40; Guilland, Institutions, pp. 535-62.

[27]This office was held by Apsimar before he became Emperor Tiberius III (715-717).

[28]Bury, I.A.S., p. 109; Guilland, B.Z., 44, 212.

[29]A third naval theme of Samos was probably a much later creation. See on this subject and also for the other two themes, Pertusi, De thematibus, pp. 153-54 (Samos); pp. 154-55 (Aegean Sea); pp. 119-32 (Cibyrrhaeot); pp. 170-72 (Hellas).

[30]Ibid., pp. 144-55.

[31]On Sicily, see ibid., pp. 178-80. On the Exarchate of Ravenna, see C. Diehl, Etudes sur l'administration byzantine dans l'Exarchat de Ravenne (568-751) (Paris, 1888), p. 197.

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one, at least until 698.[32]

While the Byzantines were securing their naval supremacy in the East by means of great naval victories, an undramatic change was occurring in the West. Here, the western Arabs crossed into Spain and after a single encounter mastered that country.[33] Then they crossed the Pyrenees. As a result of this achievement the tide began to shift in favor of the Moslems, for they had now completely secured the western shore of the Mediterranean. It was just a matter of time before the entire area would be at the mercy of the Moslems. The character of their offensive now changed. Instead of merely raiding for booty and/or slaves, they sought to acquire control of the entire western Mediterranean basin. The first region to come under attack was Sicily. In 752-753 the Governor of Africa, Abd al-Rahman and his brother Abd Allah led a large invasion. This offensive proved premature. Byzantium still had the ability to counterattack while the Moslems had internal problems at home.[34] The attack, nevertheless, marks a definite change in the balance of power in the West. At about the same time Byzantium suffered a

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[32]This is conjectural. Bury, "Naval Policy," p. 25, denies the existence of such a naval force in Carthage. Heraclius (610-641), however, used an African fleet to take Constantinople in his struggle with the Emperor Phocas (602-611).

[33]In the Moslem conquest of Spain, as in Syria and Egypt, one battle decided the fate of the land. See Muir, op. cit., pp. 355-58; Hitti, op. cit., pp. 493-97.

[34]On this expedition, see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 64; M. Amari, Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia (Catania, 1933-1939), I, 299-300. Hereafter cited as Amari, Storia.

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further blow to her position in the West. She lost the Exarchate of Ravenna permanently in 751,[35] while the alienation of the Papacy and the Italian states further weakened the position of Sicily. Isolated, Sicily was left alone to defend the entire western Mediterranean.

In the ninth century the position of the empire at sea further deteriorated with the appearance or reappearance of several other challengers. There were the fleets of Syria, Spain, North Africa, the Carolingian empire, and the Italian city states. Of the Arab fleets, the most dangerous to the West was the African fleet, reorganized under the energetic Aghlabid dynasty.[36] The power of this Arab fleet can be seen as early as 805 in the raid on the Peloponnesian city of Patras.[37] At the same time the Carolingians began to challenge the Byzantines for control of the Adriatic, aiming at Venice, Istria, and Dalmatia.[38] More ominous was the appearance of independent naval power among the Italian city states. Although they swore token allegiance to the

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[35]N. Tobias, "Exarchate of Ravenna," in New Catholic Encyclopedia, XII (1966), 95-96.

[36]On the Aghlabids, see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 64; Amari, Storia, I, 353-54. They obtained their independence by 805.

[37]See De administrando imperio, pp. 228-33 (chap., 49); refers to African Saracens (ἀφρικοὺς Σαρακηνούς).

[38]Bury, E.R.E., pp. 322-26.

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emperor, they often followed an independent policy.[39]

Regardless of these developments, the empire maintained her supremacy at sea until the year 821. In this year a disaster occurred which, coupled with the emergence of naval pressures, finally broke the dominance of the empire at sea. This disaster was the revolt of Thomas the Slav in 821-823. The revolt itself was a curious mixture of many heterogeneous elements of discontent--racial, religious, and social. In his drive for power, Thomas received valuable assistance from the Caliph al-Mamun (813-833), whose Syrian fleet ravaged the islands of the Aegean. Despite all these factors in his favor, Thomas was defeated on both land and sea, for the emperor received the valuable but timely assistance of the Bulgars, and the imperial fleet remained loyal.[40] The cost of this victory, however, was irreparable.[41] From a

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[39]Venice, for instance, was autonomous from 742 and had a fleet of sixty to eighty ships. See, on this, T. Hodgkin, Italy and Her Invaders (Oxford, 1916), VI, 490; H. Brown, Studies in Venetian History (London, 1907), I, 10-47, 115-47. On Naples, J. Gay, L'Italie méridionale et L'empire byzantin (Paris, 1904), I, 43-48. A. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 120-22, believes that these states emerged as naval powers because Byzantium gave them a monopoly of distributing her products in Europe. Once these cities amassed profits, they went to the source of supply in their own ships. In this fashion their maritime power emerged. Ragusa also developed in a similar fashion. On this, see Krekić, op. cit., pp. 13-16.

[40]On the revolt of Thomas, see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 22-48; Bury, E.R.E., pp. 84-110. Thomas had the Cibyrrhaeot and Aegean fleets under his command.

[41]In all probability this revolt created very serious social changes in Asia Minor and may have been responsible for the emergence of the large landholders of the tenth century. See A. A. Vasiliev, The History of the Byzantine Empire (Wisconsin, 1952), pp. 275-76; Bury, E.R.E., p. 110. The most recent and exhaustive study of this problem is by Lemerle in Travaux et mémoire, I, 254-97.

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naval standpoint, the imperial fleet had to destroy her own thematic fleets to achieve victory. All this occurred at the critical moment when the empire needed these forces to buttress her naval strength against her newly formed maritime enemies.

In the years which followed, her enemies reaped the benefits of this disaster. First, Crete fell to the Spanish Arabs who descended on the island from Alexandria.[42] More significant from a Western standpoint was the Arab offensive on Sicily. Unlike some earlier raids, this was a full-scale invasion, designed to reduce the island under Islamic sway. It was made possible by the defection of the Byzantine fleet under its Admiral Euphemius, who went over to the Arabs. The Byzantines immediately took alarm and increased their naval strength by calling on their ally Venice.[43] It was the Byzantine fleet, however, that drove the African fleet from the harbor of Syracuse.[44]

Undiscouraged by this initial defeat the Arabs returned in the following year and doggedly began the systematic

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[42]See Chapter V on this subject. The fall of Crete perhaps had a serious effect on the communications between the capital and Sicily.

[43]John of Venice, M.G.H. SS., VII, 16_{24-30}: "Hac etiam tempestate Michahel imperator mittens exercitum ad Siciliam, Veneticorum auxilium petiit, cui Justinianus dux quasdam bellicosas naves transmittere studuit." See, also, Dandulus, Chronicon, ed. L. A. Muratori in Rerum Italicarum scriptores (Milan, 1723-1751), XII, 170: "Hic Dux Imperialis Consul ab Imperatore Requisitus quasdam bellicosas naves contra Saracenos, qui invaserant, destinavit."

[44]Nuwarī, in Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 379-82.

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conquest of the western part of the island. The key to their success lay in the capture of Palermo (in 831),[45] which became the Arabs' most important base. The Arab position at Palermo was soon strengthened by two new developments. First, they secured their lines of communication with Africa by the recapture of Pantelleria in 835.[46] Secondly, Palermo entered into an alliance with Naples.[47] This alliance, perhaps, grew up from the fact that the Arabs assisted the Neapolitans against their enemy, the Lombard Prince of Beneventum,[48] but commercial reasons may have been a more important factor. The alliance further weakened the Byzantine position, especially in the Tyrrhenian Sea. Thus Sicily was still more isolated. In 843, the Arabs captured the strategic city of Messina, which dominated the straits between Calabria and Sicily.[49] The capture of Messina was facilitated by two other developments. On the one hand, the Arabs had systematically captured key bases on the mainland

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[45] Cambridge Chronicle, ed. Cozza-Luzi (Palermo, 1890), p. 24. See, also, Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 344.

[46] Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 360). It is called Qusira (Kongra, Pantellaria) by the Arabs. (It was taken by the Arabs in 700 but apparently retaken by the Byzantines some time thereafter.)

[47] Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 179-81. He dates this in the year 836 (p. 181).

[48] Ibid., pp. 179ff.

[49] Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 363). The Arab commander was al-Fadl. See, also, Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 204-05.

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such as Brindisium in 838,[50] Tarentum in 839,[51] and Bari in 841,[52] preventing any assistance from reaching Sicily. At the same time, the Arabs crippled a Venetian fleet of sixty vessels off Croton in the Gulf of Tarentum.[53]

These Arab victories opened up the Adriatic to their fleets, employing Bari as an advanced base.[54] In 841 they captured and burned Ancona and Osero, on the island of Cherso.[55] In the following year they defeated a Venetian squadron in the Gulf of Quarnero.[56] Some time later the Byzantines suffered further losses on Sicily which

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[50] Chronicon Salernitanum, ed. G. Pertz in Monumenta Germaniae Historia. Scriptorum (Hanover, 1839), III, 503_{29-32} ("Sine mora Brindisim civitatem pugnando ceperunt").

[51] Ibid., 508_{6-9} ("Tarentum veniunt eamque sine mora ceperunt").

[52] The date for the capture of Bari is unknown. Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 209, believes it to be 841; Amari, Storia, pp. 360-61, prefers 842. For a general picture of these developments see, also, Gay, op. cit., pp. 25-69; E. Dümmler, Geschichte des Ostfränkischen Reiches (Berlin, 1862), I, 185; F. Lenormand, La Grande-Grece (Paris, 1881), I, 69; L. M. Hartmann, Geschichte Italiens im Mittelalter (4 vols.; Gotha, 1897-1915), III, Part I, 194-230, hereafter cited as Hartmann, Geschichte.

[53] Dandulus, p. 175; John of Venice, M.G.H. SS., 17_{36-44}. In this case again the Byzantines sent Theodosius to obtain Venetian assistance. The defeat is also recorded by Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 362.

[54] Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 209-12.

[55] John of Venice, M.G.H. SS., 17_{44-52} ("Ad Absarensem civitatem usque pertingere non dubitaverunt, et in feria secunda pasce incendio eam devastantes, ad Anconain civitatem transierunt; quam similiter igne concremantes, multos captivos exinde secum detulerunt").

[56] Ibid., 18_{1-2} ("ad Quarnarii culfum pervenerunt").

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culminated in the loss of the fortress of Castrogiovanni in 859.[57]

The imperial government could do little to halt this Moslem advance in the West, for while repairing the losses suffered during Thomas the Slav's rebellion, the empire was faced with all these enemies at once. To protect its sprawling empire, it had to spread its lines too thin for its limited resources. As a result, Byzantium could not intervene effectively anywhere. The empire, however, did the best that it could, considering its limited resources and the fact that it was also fighting a two-front war. When they were able, the Byzantines sent large armadas to the West, such as the one under Alexius Musele in 838,[58] or the large fleet of 300 sail which suffered a defeat in 859.[59] The imperial government also sought to develop the theme system in the Ionian Sea area. Already the themes of the Peloponnesus[60] and Cephallonia[61] were created by the early

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[57]Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 366-68).

[58]Bury, E.R.E., p. 305; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 144-45.

[59]Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 367). He says that the Byzantines lost 100 of 300 ships in this contest.

[60]On the theme of the Peloponnesus, see note in Chapter III. Early scholars believed that the theme of the Peloponnesus was created in response to the attack on Patras in 805, for it is first specifically mentioned in 812. According to a passage in the De administrando imperio (p. 228), it appears that the besieged city of Patras was awaiting the assistance of the strategos from Corinth, which would indicate that the theme was already in existence. Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, p. 172 (n. 2), believes that it was created earlier, perhaps in 783 after the campaign of Stauricius. According to Charonis, Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of Albert M. Friend, Jr., pp. 161-73, it was created about the year 780 A.D.

[61]Cephallonia as a theme is mentioned as early as 809 when its strategos, Paulus, sailed against Venice. See Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, p. 172 (n. 3).

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ninth century. Now several other themes were created. According to the Taktikon Uspenski the theme of Dyrrachium was added during the period 842-856.[62] It is also possible that Nicopolis was added at this time.[63]

From the above measures taken by the imperial government, especially by the Amorians, it appears that the Byzantines were by no means lax in their endeavors to come to the succor of their possessions in the West. They just did not have the resources to spare until the East was secured. In many ways they were strengthening their position preparatory to a counterattack. The blows against Egypt in 853 and 859 were obviously designed for this, since the empire could not have another foe in the East.[64] Caesar Bardas' projected campaign against the island of Crete in 866 must also be seen in this light.[65] Undoubtedly, it was to free Byzantine lands in the East so they could restore their weakening Western position. Unfortunately the Amorians never had the chance to carry out their plans in the West.

When Basil became emperor in 867, he had to act with haste to alleviate the dangers in the West. Since the early raids of the 840's, the Arabs had left the shores of the

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[62] Taktikon Uspenski, p. 115.

[63] Bury, "Naval Policy," p. 30; compare Pertusi, De thematibus, pp. 176-77.

[64] For the Byzantine raids on Damietta, see Tabarī (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 315-17).

[65] See Chapter III.

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Adriatic in relative peace.[66] This could be accounted for by internal conflicts among the Arabs. Ibn al-Iḏārī reports a conflict between the Sicilian and Cretan Arabs which led to an attack on Crete by the brother of ab-Abbas, the governor of Sicily.[67]

After 858, the Arabs resumed their offensive in the West, sparing neither Sicily nor the Adriatic.[68] According to the account of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, an Arab flotilla of thirty-six ships under the commanders Soldanus,[69] Saba,[70] and Kalphus[71] attacked the Dalmatian coast late in the reign of Michael III.[72] The fortress towns of Butova,[73]

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[66]Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 204-12, has shown that there was little activity in both the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian seas.

[67]Ibn al-Iḏārī (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 377); see under the year 244 A.H. (April 7, 858-April 7, 859).

[68]Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 219-22, 258-64; Bury, E.R.E., pp. 314-15; Gay, op. cit., pp. 49-76; Hartmann, Geschichte, III, Part I, 196ff.

[69]Soldanus was Sawdan (Saugdan), the Emir of Bari (867-871). On this, see Amari, Storia, I, 497-525; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 264 (n. 2); Gay, op. cit., I, 64-74.

[70]Saba or Sambas was probably the ruler of Tarentum. See Amari, Storia, I, 496 (n. 2).

[71]On Kalphus, see ibid., pp. 498, 501.

[72]On this siege, see De administrando imperio, 126$_{89-93}$ (ἐλθόντων Σαρακηνῶν ἀπὸ ἀφρικῆς, τοῦ τε Σολδανοῦ καὶ τοῦ Σάβα καὶ τοῦ Καλφοῦς, μετὰ καραβίων λς', κατέλαβον ἐν Δελματίᾳ, καὶ ἐπόρθησαν τὸ κάστρον τὰ Βούτοβα καὶ τὸ κάστρον τὴν Ῥώσσαν καὶ τὸ κάστρον τὰ Δεκέτερα, τὸ κάτω). On the chronological problem of this attack and its confusion with an earlier raid, see Hirsch, op. cit., pp. 253-55; Bury, B.Z., 15, 548-49.

[73]Butova is Budua. See J. G. Wilkinson, Dalmatia and Montenegro (2 vols; London, 1848), I, 279.

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Rossa,[74] and the lower part of Decatera[75] were taken. Following these successes the Arabs began the siege of the city of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) which lasted fifteen months.[76] According to Constantine, Ragusa was founded during the Slavonic invasions of the Balkans by the inhabitants of Pitaura (Epidaurus) who had fled the invading hordes.[77] Apparently the city started as a humble agglomeration of refugees who had fled into this precipitous area, and steadily grew as neighboring groups joined it.[78] By the middle of the eighth century, the prosperity of the city attracted the attention of Arab pirates who commenced to attack this region in 740. For protection against such depredations a fortress was constructed in 754.[79] Later in 782 the Ragusans commenced the construction of their first galleys. The following year

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[74]Rossa is probably Risano; ibid., p. 394.

[75]Decatera is Cottara (Kotor, Catharum). See T. G. Jackson, Dalmatia, the Quarnero and Istria (3 vols.; Oxford, 1887), III, 2, 3. On the description of the fortress town, see De administrando imperio, 136_{263-71}.

[76]Ibid., 126_{93-94} (καὶ ἦλθον καὶ εἰς τὸ κάστρον Ῥαουσίου, καὶ παρεκάθισαν αὐτῷ μῆνας δεκαπέντε). See, also, Vita Basilii, 289_{3-13}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 219_{4-12}.

[77]De administrando imperio, 134_{217-31}.

[78]Ibid. Constantine says:
"Those who were able to escape and reach safety settled in the almost precipitous spot where the city now is; they built it small to begin with, and afterwards enlarged it, and later still extended its wall until the city reached its present size, owing to their gradual spreading out and increase in population."

[79]Annales ragusini anonymi, ed. Sp. Nodilo (Zagreb, 1883), p. 10. Earlier in 740 the Arabs had begun their raids on Epidaurus, etc. (p. 8).

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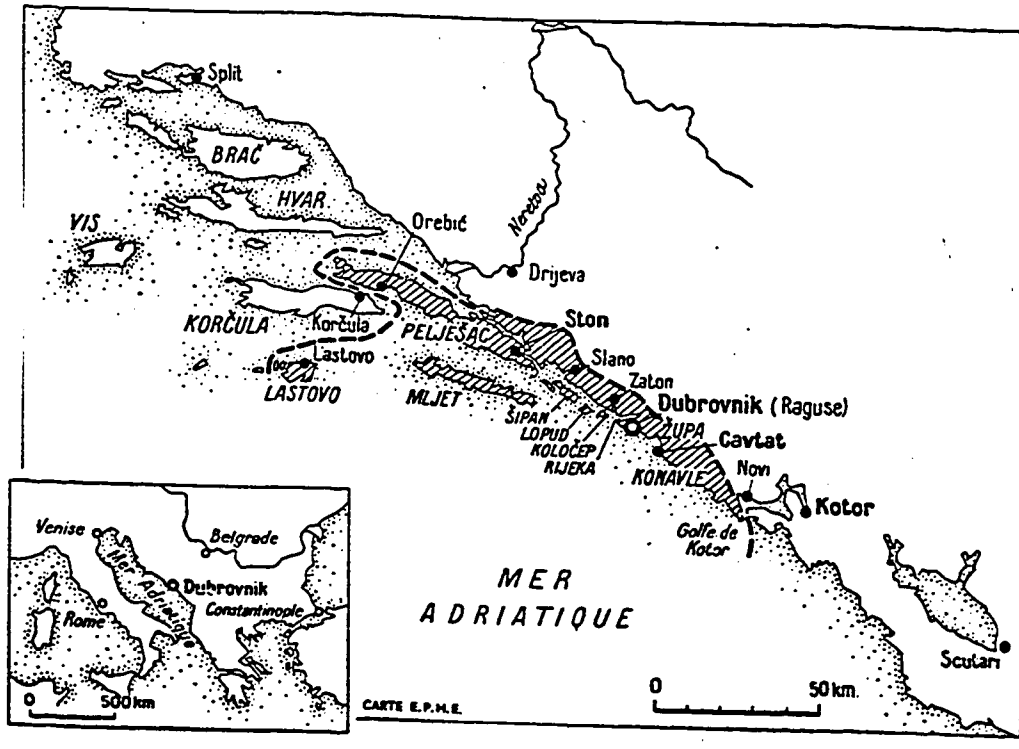

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proved the sagacity of this measure, for they were able to defeat an Arab flotilla.[80]

In the ninth century the importance of Ragusa[81] grew still greater. The key factor in this development was the growth of her trade and shipping.[82] To protect these, Ragusa undoubtedly enlarged her fleet, for Constantine remarks that she had a considerable fleet later.[83] These factors made Ragusa the most important single fortress on the Dalmatian coast.[84] Prior to the invention of gunpowder her position was practically invulnerable. More significant, she represented the last vestige of Byzantine control in this area.[85] If she fell, the entire area would be lost. This would indubitably endanger the Byzantine position in Dyrrachium and mainland Greece.[86] Worse, Byzantium would lose all

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[80] Ibid., p. 11. The Ragusans defeated these pirates with the aid of a certain Orlando, nephew of Charles, King of the Franks ("Orlando nepote di Carlo, re di Franza"). On the above, see Annali di Ragusa di Nicolo di Ragnina, ed. Sp. Nodilo (Zagreb, 1883), pp. 187-88.

[81] Prior to the work of Krekić, op. cit., there is little that is useful on Ragusa. Two other works, however, are also important: J. C. Engel, Geschichte des Freystaates Ragusa (1807), and J. Tadić, Dubrovnik od postanka do kraja XV stoljeia (Belgrade-Zagreb, 1953). Both were unavailable to me.

[82] The sources on this are sparse, but most modern historians accept this point of view. Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 15; Krekić, op. cit., p. 16.

[83] De administrando imperio, 128_{107-12}. Here Constantine relates how Ragusa assisted the Byzantines with her fleet.

[84] Ibid., pp. 134-39. [85] Ibid., pp. 138-46 (chap. xxx).

[86] Compare the Arab attack on Patras earlier in the ninth century.

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command of the Adriatic and the Ionian seas. Even more threatening was the possible encirclement of the empire.[87]

Under these circumstances Basil had to come to the assistance of Ragusa when she pleaded for aid.[88] In 868 Basil disregarded the eastern frontier, assuming it was secure, and decided on an all-out western offensive.[89] Basil entrusted a fleet of 100 warships to the command of the Drungarius of the Fleet, Nicetas Ooryphas.[90] The news of the approach of a Byzantine fleet forced the Arabs to raise their long siege of Ragusa and to hurry back to their bases in Italy. Perhaps, as on another occasion, the Arabs had taken some precautions by establishing lookouts on

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[87] Bury, "Naval Policy," p. 24.

[88] De administrando imperio, 127_{94-96}: "Then in their straits the Ragusans made a declaration to Basil, the ever-memorable emperor of the Romans, saying to him: 'Have pity on us and do not allow us to be destroyed by them that deny Christ.'" Vita Basilii, 289_{13-20}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 219_{13-18}.

[89] De administrando imperio, 126_{95-99}-128_{1-3}; Vita Basilii, 290_{7-11}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 219_{18-22}.

[90] There were several Ooryphases in Byzantine history. First, according to Theophanes Continuatus, 81_{6-12}, there was one who commanded a fleet under Michael II (820-829). Second, there was an Ooryphas who was one of the commanders in the Damietta raid in 853 (Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 214-15 (n. 3). Third, Pseudo-Symeon, 617_{7-10}, mentions an Ooryphas who commanded the fleet at the time of Michael's death; see, also, the Vita Ignatii, 516 (Καὶ ὅσας αὐτῷ Νικήτας ὁ τοῦ Βασιλικοῦ στόλου δρουγγάριος, ὁ Ὠρύφας λεγόμενος...). Four, Pseudo-Symeon, 674_{13-16}, also mentions an Ooryphas who was prefect of the city (Τὸν Ὀρύφαν ὕπαρχον ἐν τῇ πόλει...) at the time of the Russian attack. Five, there is an Ooryphas who commanded Basil's in the Dalmatian campaign. Because of chronological reasons it seems highly unlikely that the first and the last were the same man.

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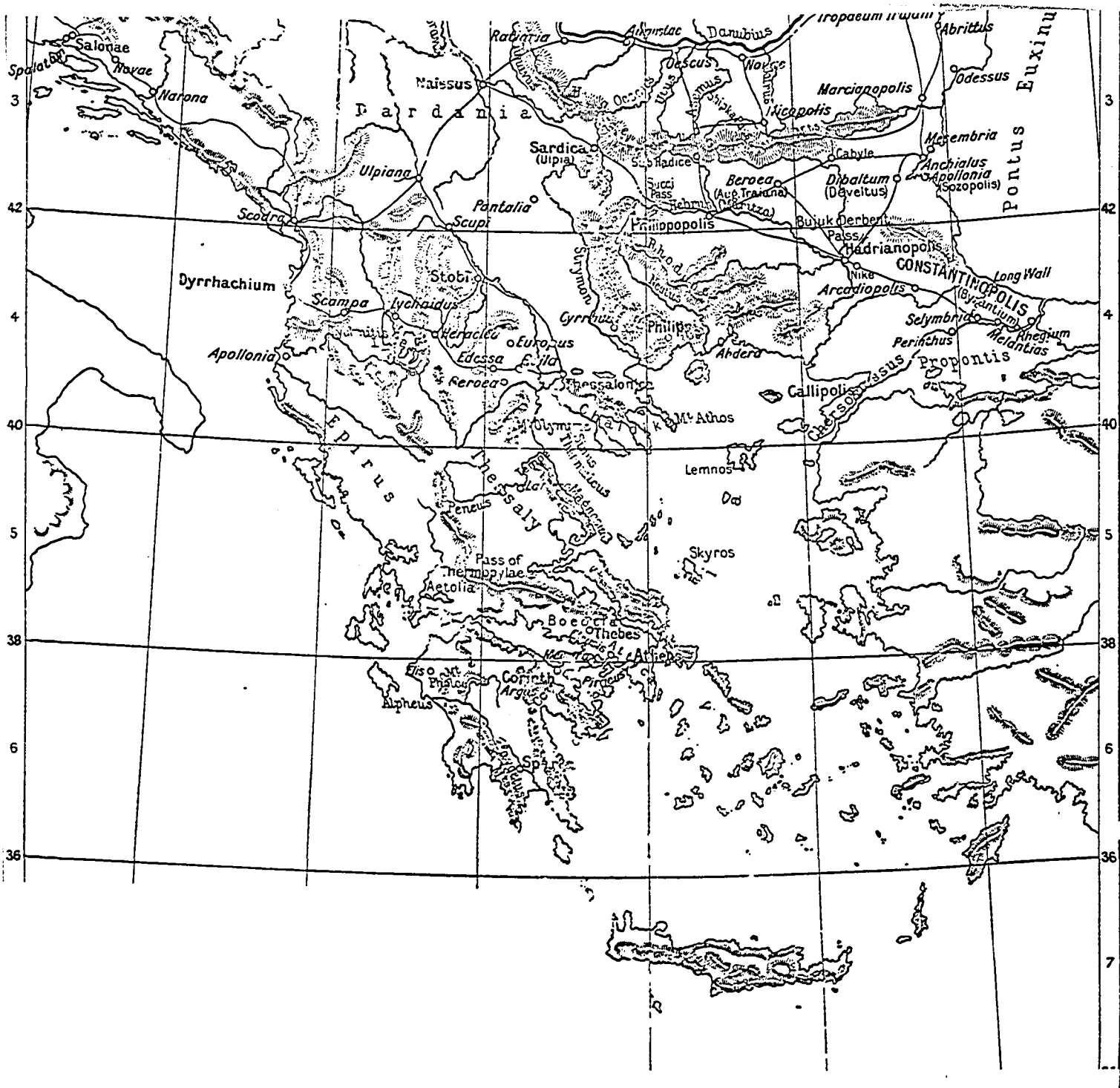

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the coast which informed them of the approach of the Byzantine fleet.[91]

When Nicetas arrived at Ragusa he probably set into motion plans to strengthen the Byzantine position in Dalmatia.[92] Here, since the ninth century, two powers--Byzantium

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[91] See Chapter V. On another occasion when the Arabs attacked, they took the precaution to establish lookouts at Cape Malea. See Vita Basilii, 300_{7-22}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 228_{2-7}.

[92] On Dalmatia, see the following: J. Lucius, De Regno Dalmatiae et Croatiae librii sex (Amsterdam, 1668); D. Farlati and J. Coleti, Illyricum Sacrum (Venice, 1751-1819); P. J. Šafařík, Slavische Alterthümer (Leipzig, 1844); Wilkinson, op. cit.; E. Dümmler, "Über die älteste Geschichte der Slaven in Dalmatien," Sitzungsberichte der k. Akad. Wien, phil.-hist. kl., 20 (1856), 357-68; P. J. Šafařík, Slovanské Starožitnosti (2d ed., Praha, 1862-1863); K. Jireček, Die Handelsstrassen und Bergwerke von Serbien und Bosnien (Prague, 1879); S. Novaković, "Srpske Oblasti X, XI veka," Glasnik srpskog drustva, 48 (1880), 1-152; K. Grot, Izvestija Konstantina Bagrjanorodnago o Serbach i Chorvatach (St. Petersburg, 1880); H. Con, La province romaine de Dalmatia (Paris, 1882); Jackson, op. cit.; K. Jireček, "Die Romanen in den Städten Dalmatiens während des Mittelalters," Denkschriften der k. Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. kl., 48-49 (Vienna, 1902); L. Niederle, Slovanské Starožitnosti (3 vols.; Prague, 1902-21); K. Jireček, Geschichte der Serben (Gotha, 1911), I; F. Šišić, Geschichte der Kroaten (Zagreb, 1917), I; V. N. Zlatarsky, Istorija na B'lgarskata D'ržava prez srednite vekove (Sofia, 1918-1927), I, Parts I-II; P. Skok, "Iz srpskohrvatske toponomastike," Južnoslovenski Filolog, 2 (1921), 311-18; 3 (1922-1923), 72-77; 6 (1926-1927), 65-95; G. Fehér, "Ungarns Gebetsgrenzen in der Mitte der 10 Jahrhunderts," Ungarische Jahrbücher, 2 (1922), 37-69; L. Niederle, Manuel de l'antiquité slave (Paris, 1923), I; F. Šišić, Povijest Hrvata u vrijeme narodnih vladara (Zagreb, 1923); V. N. Zlatarsky, Zbornik Kralja Tomislava (Zagreb, 1925); F. Dvornik, Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome au IX^{e} siècle (Paris, 1926), hereafter cited as Dvornik, Les Slaves; P. Skok, "Ostsnamenstudien zu De administrando imperio der Kaisers Constantin Porphyrogennetos," Zeitschrift für Ostsnamenforchung, 4 (1928), 213-44; Dvornik, Les Légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance; P. Skok, Dolazak Slovena na Mediteran (Split, 1934); L. Hauptmann, "Seobe Hrvata i Srba," Jugoslovenski Istoriski Časopis, 3 (1937), 30-61; G. Novak, Proslast Dalmacije (Zagreb, 1944); H. Grégoire, "L'origine

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and the Franks--carefully watched each other.

The latter had gained control over Istria during the reign of Charlemagne. This brought the Slovenes and the majority of the Croats under Frankish authority.[93] The coastal Roman towns and the Slavic tribes which would eventually make up the Serbian state remained under Byzantine control. During the revolt of Thomas the Slav the Byzantine position was significantly altered and imperial control lapsed.[94] Constantine Porphyrogenitus describes the situation as follows:

> But when the Roman empire, through the sloth and inexperience of those who then governed it and especially in the time of Michael from Amorion, the Lisper, had declined to the verge of total extinction, the inhabitants of the cities of Dalmatia became independent,

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et le nom des Croates et des Serbes," Byzantion, 17 (1945), 88-118; F. Dvornik, The Making of Central and Eastern Europe (London, 1949); G. Labuda, Pierwsze państwo Slowianskie: Państwo Samona (Poznan, 1949); M. Barada, "Dalmatia Superior," Rad. Jugasl. Akad., 270 (1949), 5ff.; J. Posedel, "Pitanje dalmatinskog temata u prvaj polovici IX stoljeca," Historijski Zbornik, 3 (1950), 217ff.; P. Skok, Slavenstvo i romanstvo na jadranskim otocima (Zagreb, 1950); K. Jireček and J. Radonic, Istorija Srba (Belgrade, 1952); J. Tadić, Dubrovnik od postanka do Kraja XV stoljeca (Belgrade-Zagreb, 1953); F. Dvornik, The Slavs: Their Early History and Civilization (Boston, 1956), hereafter cited as Dvornik, The Slavs; J. Ferluga, Vizantinska uprava u Dalmaciji (Belgrade, 1957); B. Ferjančić (ed.), Vizantiski Izvori za Istoriju Naroda Jugoslavije (S.A.N., Belgrade, 1959), II; Krekić, op. cit.

[93] See Dvornik, The Slavs, pp. 67-79; Dvornik, Les Slaves, pp. 47ff.; Bury, E.R.E., pp. 326-31; F. Dölger, Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt (Ettal, 1953), pp. 326ff., hereafter cited as Dölger, Byzanz; Ferluga, op. cit., pp. 68-86.

[94] This view was accepted by earlier scholars: Hopf, op. cit., p. 119; O. Harnack, Die Beziehungen des frankisch-italischen zum byzantinischen Reiche unter der Regierung Karls des Grossen unter der späteren Kaiser karolingischen Stammes (Gottingen, 1880), p. 70. Opposed is Hirsch, op. cit., p. 198, who believes it was, instead, Michael III.

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> subject neither to the emperor of the Romans nor to anybody else, and, what is more, the nations of these parts, the Croats and Serbs and Zachlumites, Terbuniotes and Kanalites and Diocletians and the Pagani, shook off the reigns of the empire of the Romans and became self-governing and independent, subject to none. Princes, as they say, these nations had none, but only Zupans, Elders, as is the rule in the other Slavonic regions.[95]

Nicetas' first task was to pave the way for the resumption of Byzantine control over the Dalmatian littoral. Perhaps it was at this time that the Archonate of Dalmatia was transformed into a theme.[96] This administrative change, together with the actual return of Byzantine authority, must have taken several years to complete.[97] The restitution of Byzantine control in this region, however, constituted only the first step in Basil's Western policy. The emperor knew only too well that Dalmatia would not be secure unless imperial authority was reimposed on the Croats in the north.[98] Furthermore, the Arab bases in southern Italy would have to be eliminated. The restoration of imperial Italy was as much a part of Basil's plan as the restoration of Dalmatia.[99]

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[95] De administrando imperio, 134$_{58-69}$.

[96] According to the Taktikon Uspenski, p. 124, Dalmatia was an Archonate during the period 845-856. Ferluga, op. cit., pp. 68-86, believes that the Archonate of Dalmatia was transformed into a theme by Basil approximately in 870.

[97] This seems obvious from the fact that the Byzantines not only carried out the extension of their authority in the north but began missionary activities here and in Serbia. See Dvornik, Les Slaves, pp. 214-85.

[98] The Byzantines attacked the Croatian allies of the Franks while they were assisting Louis II, for Nicetas attacked the Slavic pirates in 870.

[99] Dvornik, Les Slaves, p. 217; Bury, "Naval Policy," p. 31.

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Only when Italy was secure could an effective offensive be launched for the recovery of Sicily. Basil apparently hoped to restore the imperial position in the West completely. While the work proceeded on the Dalmatian coast, the situation had grown especially grave in Italy.

Since the beginning of the ninth century, Italy had been divided between two emperors--the Eastern and Western. The former retained Venice, a large part of Campania, and the toe and heel of the peninsula. The rest was subject to the Western emperor.[100] This description hardly reveals the de facto situation. The Lombard Duchy of Beneventum, while expressing allegiance to the Western emperor, actually pursued an independent course.[101] As a consequence Western imperial authority did not reach beyond the Papal States and the Duchy of Spoleto.[102] Byzantine authority was in the same state. While Venice[103] and the Campanian cities[104] expressed a nominal allegiance to Constantinople, they pursued an autonomous path which led to their independence by

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[100] On medieval Italy in this period, see Gay, op. cit., pp. 1-76; Hartmann, Geschichte; L. M. Hartmann, The Early Medieval State: Byzantium, Italy and the West, hereafter cited as Hartmann, The Early Medieval State; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 177-87, 209-12, 258-64; Bury, E.R.E., pp. 308-16; Amari, Storia.

[101] Bury, E.R.E., p. 311 (Beneventum comprised Samnium, the greater part of Apulia, Lucania, and the North of Calabria).

[102] Ibid., p. 309.

[103] Ibid., pp. 317-26; R. Cessi, "Venice to the Eve of the Fourth Crusade," in the new Cambridge Medieval History, IV, 251-73; H. Kretschmayr, Geschichte von Venedig (2 vols.; Gotha, 1905-1920).

[104] These included Naples, Amalfi, and Gaeta.

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the middle of the ninth century.[105] Imperial authority, therefore, was only effectively exercised in Calabria (Bruttium) and Apulia on the two southern extremities.[106]

A sharp rivalry existed between these states, resulting in an almost anarchical situation. The Lombard princes continuously tried to extend their authority over the Campanian cities.[107] In the long run, the Lombards failed in their endeavor because of internal strife among the nobility.[108] Ultimately the Duchy of Beneventum was reduced to smaller dimensions by the creation of two smaller states--the Duchy of Salerno and the Duchy of Capua.[109] On the

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[105] With the Lombard and Arab advances in southern Italy, the Byzantine possessions in the south were limited to Reggio, Cotrone, Rosano, and Amantea in Calabria and Otranto and Gallipoli in Apulia. The effect that the Arabs had on the Byzantine population can be seen in the lives of the saints. See da Costa-Louillet, Byzantion, 29-30, 89-173. What remained of the Byzantine possessions in the south were governed by an official called the Duke of Calabria, but he was dependent on the Sicilian strategos.

[106] While Venice did not renounce the authority of the Eastern emperor, by 840 under the leadership of Peter Trandenicus she concluded an agreement with the Emperor Lothair which marks the first stage of her independence. On this, see Kretschmayr, op. cit., pp. 92ff., and E. Lentz, "Der Allmähliche Uebergang Venedigs von faktischer zu nomineller Abhängigkeit von Byzanz," B.Z., 3 (1894), 64-115. In Naples the movement toward independence can be seen during the reign of Stephen II, when the head of the emperor disappears from the bronze coinage and is replaced by Januarius, the patron saint of the city. See Gay, op. cit., pp. 17-19.

[107] Ibid., pp. 40-42.

[108] Hartmann, The Early Medieval State, pp. 11-15.

[109] In 849 the Duchy of Beneventum was divided in the following duchies: (1) Capua, (2) Salerno, which included Lucania and north of Colabra, and (3) Beneventum. For the date, see R. Poupardin, "Études sur l'histoire des principautée Lombardes de l'Italie méridionale," Moyen-Age, 20 (1907), 18 (n. 5).

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other hand, the Campanian cities of Naples,[110] Amalfi,[111] and Gaeta[112] were striving to establish native dynasties, while resisting the Lombards in alliance with the Moslems of Palermo.[113] Under these circumstances the Arabs found in southern Italy ideal conditions for further expansion. Exploiting the differences which existed between the Lombards, the Campanian cities, and the Byzantines, they began by seizing key bases in southern Italy such as Brindisium,[114] Tarentum,[115] and Bari,[116] to mention the most important.[117]

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[110]During the eighth century Naples remained loyal to the empire, but during Irene's reign (796-802) Duke Stephen initiated a new policy of trying to create a native dynasty. His reign also marked a reaction against the Greek language. On this, see Gay, op. cit., pp. 18-24. In the years which followed independence, internal strife ensued among the competitors for ducal power; see Hartmann, Geschichte, III, Part I, 194-230.

[111]See Gay, op. cit., pp. 54-56.

[112]Gaeta was, like Amalfi, nominally part of the Duchy of Naples, but like Amalfi it was virtually an independent city state. It lay isolated in the north, for Terracina belonged to the Pope while Minturnae, as well as Capua, was under the Lombards.

[113]This occurred in the year 836. Bury, E.R.E., p. 312; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 111; Amari, Storia, I, 312-13; Capasso, Monumenta ad Neapolitani Ducatus historiam pertinentia, (Naples, 1872), II, 147-56. The treaty is in John the Deacon, ed. G. Waitz in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum (Hanover, 1878), 431_{22-24}, hereafter cited as John the Deacon, M.G.H. SS. ("Pro quibus commotus Andreas dux, directo apocrisario, validissimam Saracenorum hostem ascivit. Quorum pavore Sichardus perterritus, infido cum illo quasi ad tempus inito foedere, omnes ei captivos reddidit.").

[114]Chronicon Salernitanum, 503_{31-32} ("sine mora Brindisim civitatem pugnando ceperunt"). On the date, see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 182; Amari, Storia, I, 354-55; Lenormand, op. cit., p. 68.

[115]Chronicon Salernitanum, 508_{7-8} ("Tarentum veniunt eamque sine mora ceperunt").

[116]Amari, Storia, I, 361-62.

[117]Pertusi, De thematibus, pp. 97-98 (chap. lxii), says that the Moslems possessed 150 fortresses (κάστρα ρν') in

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From these bases the Moslems waged a campaign by both land and sea. On the one hand they ravaged areas touched by the Tyrrhenian and the Adriatic. On the other hand, they commenced the systematic reduction of the remaining Byzantine bases in the south. The Arabs, however, did not stop here, for they soon began to push northward, raiding even the Papal States.

The danger from these incursions induced Pope Gregory IV (827-844) to strengthen the walls of the city of Rome and to build a fortress at Ostia.[118] These measures were well timed for, in 846, the Arabs took Ostia and Porto and appeared before the walls of Rome.[119] Some three years later when news indicated an impending Arab attack, Pope Leo IV (847-855) formed a league with the Campanian cities. Initially this alliance proved fruitful, for the allied fleet,

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Italy before Basil's recovery. Genesius, 116$_{1-3}$, includes among the 150 cities those in Sicily also (ἐν πόλεσι τῆς τε Σικελίας, ἔτι μὴν καὶ Λογγιβαρδίας πολυαριθμήτοις ἐπὶ ν' τε καὶ ρ', τοῦ Γαλλεριανοῦ χωρίς.)

[118] Liber Pontificalis, ed. C. Duchesne (Paris, 1892), II, 82:

> "In praedicta civitate Hostensi civitatem aliam a solo valde fortissimam, muris quoque altioribus, portis simul ac serris et cataractibus eam undique permunivit, et super, at inimicos, si evenerit, expugnandos, petrarias nobili arte composuit. Et a foris non longe ab eisdem muris ipsam civitatem altiori fossato praecinxit, ne facilius muros hostis contingere valeat."

Amari, Storia, I, 506; F. Gregorovius, History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages, trans. A. Hamilton (London, 1895), III, 87ff.; Hartmann, Geschichte, III, Part I, 213-15; Gay, op. cit., p. 56.

[119] Amari, Storia, I, 507-08; Gregorovius, op. cit., III, 90-92.

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with the help of nature, inflicted a severe reverse on the Arabs.[120] This defeat, however, did not deter the Arab land offensive.

As the danger in the south grew and pleas for assistance became more urgent, the Western emperors decided to intervene. Previously they had remained aloof from Italian affairs, but in the year 846 Lothair I (842-855) sent his son, Louis II, the future emperor, into Italy.[121] Bent on making southern Italy a part of his realm, Louis began the long struggle with the Arabs which was to preoccupy him for almost thirty years. Initially he was successful and he delivered the city of Beneventum from the Arabs.[122] However, the war entered a new phase of tedious sieges which taxed Louis II's resources to the utmost. His effectiveness was limited by other factors. First, north Italian affairs, and especially his struggle with Pope Nicholas I (855-867), diverted him.[123] To this must be added the problem of Louis' lack of naval power.[124] Regard- of these factors, in 866 Louis II renewed his offensive

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[120] On the Arab attacks in south Italy, see Vita Basilii, 288_{12-15}; Genesius, 116_{1-3}; Gay, op. cit., pp. 53, 66-67; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 210-12.

[121] Gay, op. cit., pp. 49-76.

[122] Ibid., p. 67. After relieving Beneventum Louis made an attempt to take Bari in 852, but he lacked sea power and failed.

[123] On this, see Hartmann, Geschichte, III, Part I, 231-68; Gay, op. cit., pp. 64-65, 80-83.

[124] The lack of Louis' sea power has been noted by virtually all scholars in this field (Gay, Vasiliev, Amari, and Hartmann).

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against the Arabs. This time his objective was to drive them from Apulia and Campania.[125] A whole string of towns such as Matera, Venoza, Canossa, and Oria was recovered.[126] These successes brought warm praise from the new Pope, Hadrian II (867-872), who lauded Louis' endeavors to liberate the faithful.[127] These congratulations were premature, for Bari and Tarentum, the most important bases of the Arabs, were still held by them. To resolve this situation, Louis II fixed as his objective the reduction of the fortress of Bari. In 866 he began his siege but, without sea power, this proved a difficult and protracted operation.

While Louis' campaign against Bari was in progress, the Emperor Basil was turning his attention to the West. As I have already noted, Basil had acted swiftly to save the Dalmatian cities. Dalmatia, however, was only a small part of Basil's grand strategy. The ultimate goal of the emperor was the total restoration of Byzantine authority in the West. This meant the recovery of southern Italy and Sicily, where Byzantine claims had never been relinquished.

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[125] Gay, op. cit., pp. 72-76.

[126] Chronicon Casinense, ed. G. Pertz in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptorum (Hanover, 1839), III, 224$_{46-48}$ ("Et esse congreditur cum Saracenis tropeum primitus bellicans sumpsit ex eis Victorine, ac demum omnia illorum capiens castra, solae tantum illius civitates remanserunt, Barim scilicet nec non atque Tarantum"). Lupus Protospatarius, ed. G. Pertz in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptorum (Hanover, 1844), V, 52 [867] ("Incensa est Matera a Ludovico imperatore, et idem Ludovicus imperator intravit civitatem Oriae"). Adonis Chronicon, ed. G. Pertz in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptorum (Hanover, 1836), II, 323.

[127] Hadrian II, Epistolae, ed. Migne, P.L. 122, letter 4 [868], cols. 1264-65.

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While Basil was preparing to bring his forces to bear in the West, the Paulician danger which the emperor had earlier misjudged threatened the eastern frontier again. As a result there was an urgent call for men in the East. Faced with the possibility of fighting on two fronts, Basil's plans in the West appeared to be lost. Nevertheless he was determined to pursue his objective. Perhaps Byzantine naval power at this time gave him the confidence to continue his original scheme. Recognizing that Louis II lacked sea power to crush the Arabs in Italy while he could not afford to expend men in the West, Basil decided to achieve his goals through diplomacy.[128]

Early in his reign,[129] according to Constantine, Basil offered a formal alliance to Louis II and the Papacy.[130]

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[128]On the lack of Louis' sea power, see Gay, op. cit., pp. 74-76; Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 16-17. On the Byzantine sea power, see Rambaud, op. cit., pp. 478ff.; A. Gfrörer, Byzantinische Geschichten (Graz, 1872-1877), II, 401ff.; C. Neumann, "Die byzantinische Marine," Historische Zeitschrift, 45 (1898), 12-23; Bury, "Naval Policy," pp. 33-34; F. Engreen, "Pope John VIII and the Arabs," Speculum, 20 (1945), 318-30; E. Eickhoff, Seekrieg und Seepolitik zwischen Islam und Abendland (Saarland, 1954).

[129]The date is not known for certain. Gay, op. cit., p. 89, believes they began negotiations in 868. On this, Hartmann, Geschichte, III, Part I, 283, also agrees. See, also, Dvornik, Les Slaves, p. 218. It is possible that the Spatharius Euthymius who informed the Pope of the reinstatement of Ignatius may have asked the Pope for his aid against the Arabs. On Euthymius, see Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 138-42.

[130]There is some question as to who took the initiative. Was it Basil or Louis II? In my opinion the initiative came from the former. This is supported by the following Greek sources: De administrando imperio, 128$_{103-06}$ ("On this account, therefore, the emperor sent to Louis II, King [ῥήγα] of the Franks, and to the Pope of Rome, asking their cooperation with the army which he, the emperor, had sent."); Vita

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Perhaps even Venice was approached by the Byzantines, since Arab bases in southern Italy were certainly an obstacle to Venetian trade and shipping. That is why the Venetian fleet attacked Tarentum in 840[131] and again in 867.[132]

To the Papacy which was already hard pressed by the Arab incursions, such an alliance was a welcome blessing.[133]

Basilii, 293_{9-16}; Pertusi, De thematibus, 98_{36-41}; Pseudo-Symeon, 694_{22}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 220_{19-23}. This is also verified by Latin sources: J. D. Mansi, Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio (Venice, 1771), XVI, col. 9A ("Causa nuptialis commercii, quod efficiendum ex filio imperatoris Basilii et genita praefati Dei cultoris Augusti ab utraque parte sperabatur simul et parabatur"); Hincmar, in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptorum, I, 485. There are also two letters of Pope Hadrian II to Basil I. One is dated April 1, 868; the other is dated June 10, 869. See P. Jaffé et al., Regesta Pontificum Romanorum (2 vols.; Leipzig, 1885-1888); see Nos. 2908, 2914. Hereafter cited as Jaffe. In the latter letter the Pope apologizes that the Byzantine ambassador had been detained for so long. See, also, F. Dölger, Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des Oströmischen Reiches (Munich-Berlin, 1924-1960), Part I, pp. 480-81, hereafter cited as Dölger, Regesten. Those scholars who have accepted the view that the initiative came from Basil are as follows: Hirsch, op. cit., p. 257; Gay, op. cit., pp. 71-93; Hartmann, Geschichte, III, Part I, 306; Dvornik, Les Slaves, p. 217; Dölger, Byzanz, pp. 337-38; W. Ohnsorge, Abendland und Byzanz (Darmstadt, 1958), pp. 219-20. Opposed to this view is Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 17. He believes that Louis' lack of sea power led him to call in Byzantine aid. Vasiliev's conclusion (he does not say) probably rested on the following passage in the Chronicon Salernitanum, 521_{5-6}: "Eo quod non haberet marinas hostes, statim Constantinopolim Basilio imperatori legationem misit"). This, however, occurred later (869), after Basil's earlier attempt when Louis was trying to reopen negotiations with the East.

[131] Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 182 (the major part of this fleet was destroyed by the Arabs).

[132] John of Venice, M.G.H. SS., 19_{15-17}:

> "Is diebus Ursoni Veneticorum duci munciatum est, quod exercitus Sarracenorum iuxta Tarantum maneret. Tunc navibus bellicosis eosdem dimicaturos adivit. Cumque diu inter sese decertantes, Sarraceni superati cecidissent, Venetici victores reversi sunt."

[133] The acceptance of this alliance by the Pope is mentioned by De administrando imperio, 128_{107}. See, also, Dölger, Regesten, p. 481.

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Perhaps Basil's new papal policy was also a convincing factor in winning over the Pope.[134] In the case of Louis II there were several immediate difficulties which even papal intervention could not eliminate.[135] First, the friendly relations which had existed between Louis the Pious and the Byzantines had been allowed to deteriorate.[136] This brought about a lack of communication between the two courts. To some degree this had been rectified during the Photian Schism, but the old cordiality which had existed earlier never reappeared.[137] Keeping this in mind, therefore, Louis must have entertained this alliance with some misgivings.[138] He may have been seeking some assurance of Basil's good faith.[139] A more significant obstacle to this alliance was the common claims and objectives of the two rulers in the Italian peninsula. With Basil endeavoring to restore Byzantine authority in the West and Louis simultaneously trying

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[134]Basil immediately altered his policy toward the papacy and sent the Spatharius Euthymius to inform the Pope of the reinstatement of Ignatius. According to Dvornik, The Photian Schism, p. 138, he did not leave until the spring of 868.

[135]On the role of Hadrian II in this alliance, see Hartmann, Geschichte, III, Part I, p. 283.

[136]On the relations between Louis the Pious and the Byzantines, see Bury, E.R.E., p. 331.

[137]On the relations between the Franks and the Byzantines during the Photian Schism, see Gay, op. cit., pp. 81-83. Recent studies indicate that during the Photian Schism Michael even granted Louis the right to use the imperial title. On this, see Dölger, Byzanz, pp. 311ff., 336ff.

[138]Louis did join the alliance. This is mentioned by the De administrando imperio, 128_{107}.

[139]This can be conjectured from later developments.

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to make southern Italy a part of his realm, there was bound to be friction and conflict.

To overcome some of these apprehensions, Basil proposed to reconfirm the right of the imperial title to Louis on the condition of the marriage of his heir-to-be, Constantine, and Louis' daughter Irmengard (Hermengard).[140] Although this seemingly dissipated some of the misgivings between the two courts, fears, real and imaginary, remained. As a result this alliance had little chance of success, as will be seen later.

According to the western chronicler Hincmar, Louis II knew by the spring of 869 that a Byzantine fleet of 200 ships was coming to his assistance.[141]

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[140] Marriage alliances between the two courts had been proposed earlier. In 781 a marriage had been arranged between Charles' daughter, Rotrud, and Constantine VI (780-797); see Dölger, Regesten, p. 41, No. 339. The Empress Irene (797-802) also was considering a marriage alliance with Charles when she was overthrown by a palace revolution; on this, see W. Ohnsorge, "Orthodoxus imperator vom religiösen Motiv für das Kaisertum Karls des Grosen," Jahrb. d. Gesellschaft f. niedersächs. Kirchengesch, 48 (1950), 24ff. During the reign of Theophilus (829-842) the emperor proposed a marriage between Louis, the eldest son of Lothair, and one of his daughters. This nuptial arrangement, however, was never carried out. On this, see Bury, E.R.E., p. 331. On the proposal of the marriage alliance between Basil's son and Louis' daughter, see Mansi, op. cit., p. 9. Hincmar, 485_{20-21}, is wrong when he says that Basil himself married Hermengard ("De odem Hludowico susciperet et illi in coniuqio sibi copulandam duceret filiam ipsius Hludowici a se desponsatam"). See, also, Ohnsorge, Abendland und Byzanz, p. 220.

[141] Hincmar, 481_{21-24} [869] ("Sed ut dicebatur, Hludovicus imperator ob obsessione Sarracenorum pro fratris sui petitione non debruisset discedere, cui amplius quam ducentas naves rex Graecorum auxilium contra eosdem Sarracenos festinato mittebat.").

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For reasons unknown to us, there were delays (perhaps the assembling of all the allied forces took a longer time than had been anticipated),[142] but later in that same year a fleet of 400 vessels appeared under the command of Nicetas Ooryphas, the Drungarius of the Fleet.[143] According to Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the Byzantine contingents were supplemented by forces from the Croats, Serbs, Zachlumians, Terbouniotes, Kanalites, Ragusans, and the other Dalmatian cities.[144]

In the interval between the creation of the alliance and the arrival of the fleet, Louis altered his position. According to Western tradition the late arrival of the fleet was instrumental in causing the Western emperor to change his mind.[145] The real reason may have been recent developments in Dalmatia. It must be remembered that, theoretically, the Dalmatian littoral had been divided between the Carolingians and the Byzantines by the treaty in Aachen in 812.[146] Although neither power was able to impose its authority in

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[142] Since the actual fleet had 400 ships consisting of (1) 100 vessels (the imperial fleet), (2) 200 vessels sent to Apuba in 866, and (3) 100 vessels from the Dalmatian towns, some time must have elapsed before the expedition could set sail. Compare Bury, "Naval Policy," p. 33.

[143] Hincmar, 485_{18-19} [a 869], records 400 ships ("Qui patricium suum ad Bairam cum 400 navibus miserat.").

[144] De administrando imperio, 128_{108-12}; Vita Basilii, 293_{13-16}; Pertusi, De thematibus, 92-98; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 220_{8-12}.

[145] Chronicon Salernitanum, p. 525.

[146] On the treaty, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 329-30; Ohnsorge, Abendland und Byzanz, pp. 67, 225.

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this area in the decades which immediately followed, the Byzantines finally restored their position through Basil's intervention in 868 A.D. It is conceivable that the speed by which the Byzantines succeeded in Dalmatia may have stirred apprehension in the entourage of Louis. When the rumors of the approach of a great armada followed, the Western emperor apparently reconsidered his position and came to the conclusion that it would be the Eastern emperor, not he, who would benefit most from this alliance.

The delay served as a pretext for Louis to shirk his commitments. He dismissed the majority of his troops for the season and retired himself to Venossa, where he had an interview with his brother Lothair.[147] At a later date, when Louis desired to renew this alliance with Basil, he argued that he dismissed his forces because of the lateness of the campaigning season.[148]

When Nicetas arrived finally he found to his utter dismay not only no emperor there to greet him, bit to his surprise he found only a token force maintaining the siege of Bari.[149] One can only imagine how this was viewed by the Byzantine admiral. His misgivings were further intensified when he learned that Louis had changed his mind about

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[147]Andreas of Bergamo, ed. G. Waitz in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum (Hanover, 1878), 226.

[148]This is found in a letter of Louis to Basil which is in Chronicon Salernitanum, 525.

[149]Hincmar, 485_{17-23} [A 868].

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the marriage between Basil's son and Louis' daughter. Apparently Nicetas was to have escorted her back to the imperial city. At any rate, finding the Western emperor unwilling to fulfill his part of the contract, Nicetas set sail and returned to the Gulf of Corinth, where he continued to observe the developments in the Adriatic.[150] The alliance between the two powers had had a short life.

As Basil was at this time preoccupied with a dangerous situation in the East and pressing internal problems, he decided to withdraw, momentarily, from an active participation in the Italian affairs. This does not mean that Basil gave up in the West, but his limited resources forced him to take a passive role, at least until his hands were free in the East. The Byzantine fleet, nevertheless, was retained in western waters to protect the newly won imperial position. To the Western emperor, Basil sent a letter of reproach for his failure to maintain his part of the bargain.[151]

As I have already noted, mistrust caused by fear and suspicion was largely responsible in creating an initial break between the two courts.[152] However, Louis soon came to realize that he had acted prematurely and unwisely. The discord between the two powers was exploited by the Arabs, who raided the region of Apulia and reached as far as the

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[150] Ibid., 485_{23} ("Corinthum rediit").

[151] This letter is lost, but what was said can be reconstructed from Louis' later letter to Basil. On this, see Gay op. cit., p. 86; Ohnsorge, Abendland und Byzanz, pp. 220-25.

[152] This had been noticed earlier by Gay, op. cit., pp. 98-101.

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monastery of St. Michael's on Mt. Gargano.[153] Faced with the possibility of a new Arab offensive, Louis shortly endeavored to heal the breach between the two courts by sending Anastasius the Librarian and two other ambassadors to reopen negotiations.[154] Their mission in Constantinople during the year 870 proved fruitless in the long run. Perhaps the chief reason for this was the utter lack of tact on the part of Anastasius, who became embroiled in a heated religious debate in the capital rather than dealing with the political problems at hand.[155]

The resumption of negotiations, however, brought immediate results for Louis II. According to the Chronicon Salernitanum, the Byzantine admiral, Nicetas, was again at Bari in 870.[156] Since the policing of the Adriatic was the principal responsibility of the Byzantine fleet, Nicetas was soon called away. A Byzantine squadron under the command of a certain Hadrian remained behind as a token of good

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[153] Hincmar, 485_{23-28} [869]:
"Iidem Sarraceni de Baira egredientes, et hostem Hludowici post tergum sequentes, plus quam duo milia caballorum ipsius hostis praedati sunt, et cum eisdem caballis duos ex se ipsis ordinantes cuneos, ad ecclesiam sancti Michaelis in monte Gargano perrexerunt, et clericos eiusdem ecclesiae multosque alios qui ad orationem illuc convenerant depraedantes, cum multa spolia ad sua redierunt."

[154] Anastasius was officially described as an apocrisiarius of Louis, emperor of the Italians and Franks.

[155] This had been noted earlier by Gay, op. cit., pp. 98-99; Dvornik, Les Slaves, p. 219; Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 732-58; Vogt, Basile I, pp. 321-22.

[156] Chronicon Salernitanum, 525_{48}.

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will.[157] There is good reason to conjecture that some of the Croatian allies of Louis II who had accompanied the Byzantine fleet also stayed to assist the Western emperor in his siege of Bari.[158]

The reason that Nicetas left Bari with such haste was the developments in the Dalmatian area. Here the position of the empire had been significantly strengthened and enlarged through the intervention of Nicetas in the year 868. The Dalmatian cities where Byzantine authority had lapsed returned to the imperial fold. The Dalmatian Croats and the Narentane Slavs, however, remained outside of Byzantine control.[159] The former nominally remained under the suzerainty of Louis II.[160] The Narentane Slavs, on the other hand, remained entirely independent.[161] Settled near the mouth of the Narenta River, these Slavic peoples had in the course of time occupied a number of important islands in the Adriatic, among which were Meleta (Mljet), Kourkoura

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[157] Ibid., 525_{48-50}:
"Et Nicetas quidem patricius, Hadriano loci servatore cum classibus destinato, accepta quasi pro huiusmodi re occasione, multas praedas ab ipsis Sclavenis abstulit, et quibusdam castris dirruptis, eorum homines captivas adduxit."

[158] Dvornik, Les Slaves, p. 219. Dvornik believes that the commander of this Slavic contingent was the Prince Domagoj. The presence of Slavs is also mentioned by the Chronicon Salernitanum, 526_{3-4} ("Ut eisden Sclavenis nostris cum navibus suis apud Barim in procinctu communis utilitatis consistentibus.").

[159] Dvornik, Les Slaves, pp. 220-21; Dvornik, The Slavs, pp. 122-23.

[160] Dvornik, Les Slaves, pp. 225-27. [161] Ibid.

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(Korcula), Bratza (Brac), and Phara (Huar).[162] With these islands in their possession, the Narentanes had excellent bases for piratical attacks. As this affected the sea lanes between Venice and Constantinople especially, the Venetians were the first to endeavor to render them harmless. Although the Venetians were initially successful in bringing about a modus vivendi, the Narentanes came to plague them with frequent attacks in later years.[163]

With the restoration of Byzantine authority over the Dalmatian cities, the empire assumed the responsibility of protecting the area against these piratical attacks. The incident which led to a Byzantine reprisal against the Narentanes occurred early in the year 870.[164] After the conclusion of the Council of 869-870, the returning papal

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[162] De administrando imperio, 144$_{109-10}$ (Πλησιάζουσιν δὲ αὐτοῖς νῆσοι Τέσσαρες, Τὰ Μέλετα, Τὰ Ἰτούριτουρα, ἡ Βράττα καὶ ὁ Φάρος). On the location of these, see D.A.I. Commentary, p. 123. A map can be found in Krekić, op. cit.

[163] In 830 an understanding between the Venetians and the Narentanes was concluded. This agreement, however, was not kept by the Slavs, for they soon renewed their attacks on Venice. For instance, John of Venice, M.G.H. SS., 16$_{40-41}$, mentions the baptism of the Slavs by Doge John Parteciacus (Circa haec tempora missus Sclavorum de insula Narrentis ad domnum Johannem ducem veniens, ab eo baptizatus est, pacem cum eo instituens, licet minime perdurasset"). Later, however, he records their renewed attacks: the attack of 834 and 835, 17$_{29-30}$; the attack of 846, 18$_{7-8}$.

[164] Since the last session of the Council ended in February, 870, the incident probably took place shortly thereafter, perhaps with the opening of shipping in the spring of that year.

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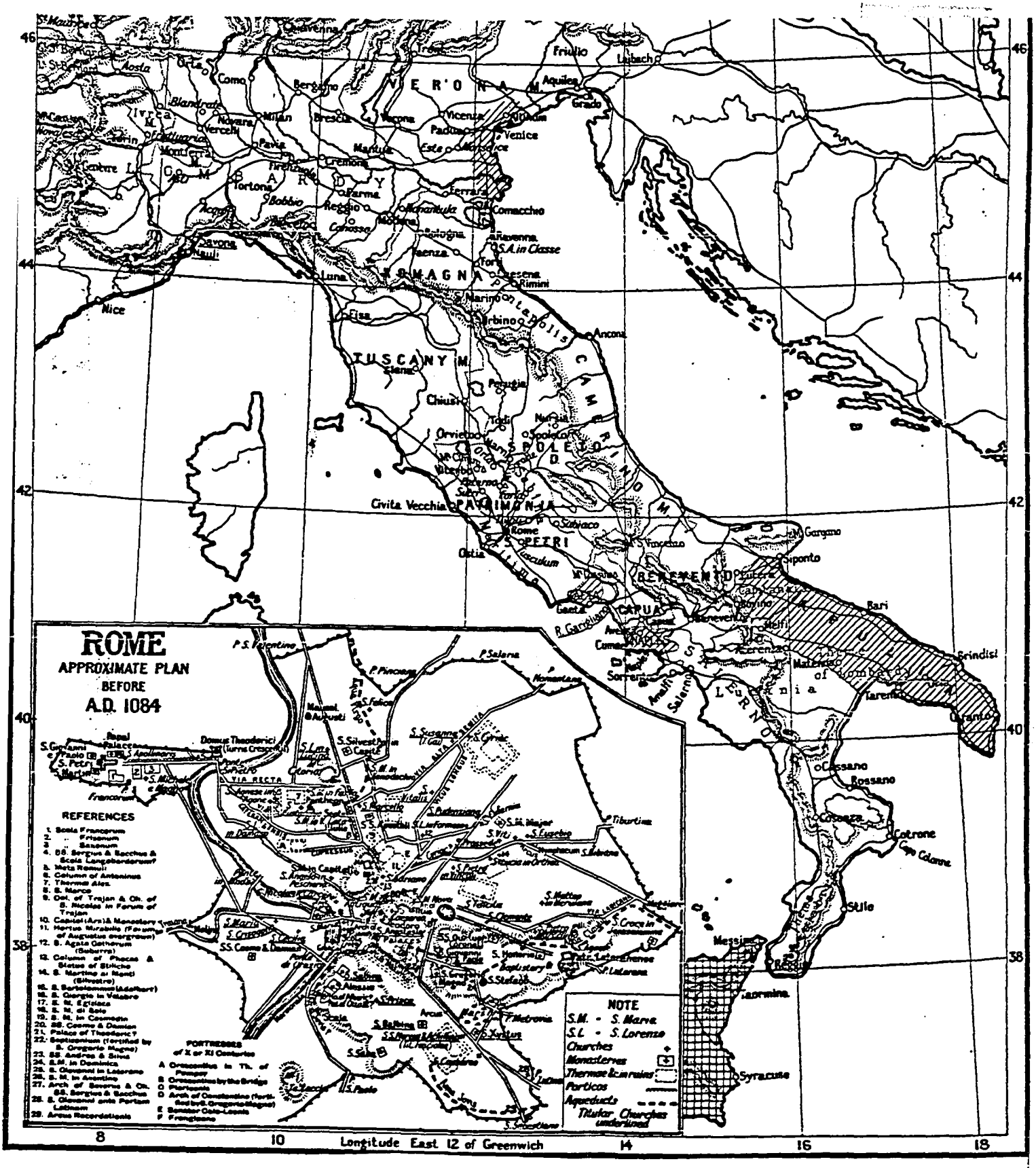

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legates were blatantly attacked by these corsairs.[165] Nicetas, as supreme commander of the Western naval forces, acted immediately to solve the problem once and for all. Leaving a squadron at Bari to watch over developments of the siege, Nicetas sailed off to begin the systematic reduction of the Narentanes.[166] One can conjecture from a letter of Louis II to Basil that the Byzantine admiral did not restrict himself to the Narentanes, but that he also brought the Dalmatian Croats, nominally subjects of the Western emperor, under imperial control.[167] Possibly Nicetas used the absence of the Croatian fleet as an opportunity to extend the influence of the empire along the entire Dalmatian littoral.[168] This was a wise precautionary measure for the Byzantines, since it would render their possessions in Dalmatia more secure. Just how long these activities preoccupied the Byzantine admiral cannot be determined precisely. But it is not inconceivable that Nicetas was involved here until 871 A.D.[169]

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[165] Liber Pontificalis, II, 183; Hadrian II, Epistolae, cols. 1309-11. In this letter to Basil dated November 10, 871, the Pope also speaks of the fact that his legates had been neglected after the Council and thus fell into the hands of the pirates and robbed. On this, see also Dvornik, The Photian Schism, p. 154.

[166] Chronicon Salernitanum, p. 525. [167] Ibid., p. 526.

[168] According to Šišić, Geschichte der Kroaten, I, 89, the absence of the Croatian fleet which was at Bari provided Basil with the excuse to extend Byzantine authority in this area.

[169] D.A.I. Commentary, p. 123.

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While the Byzantines were busy extending their authority along the Dalmatian coast, Louis II continued his siege of Bari. As the Western emperor tightened his cordon on Bari, the Emir of Amantea made a diversionary attack in Calabria.[170] The Emir's intention may have been to draw off Louis so that Bari could be resupplied. Hard pressed by this Arab offensive, the population of Calabria, unable to obtain Byzantine aid, turned to the Western emperor and implored him for aid. In return they promised to take an oath of allegiance and pay him a tribute.[171] Attracted by the possibility of making his rule in southern Italy more complete, Louis sent three envoys to Calabria. His chief representative was Otto of Bergamo, who was assisted by two ecclesiastics, Oschis and Gariardus.[172] Louis followed up by sending a small imperial force to check the Arab raid. In this it was successful, winning a victory over the Arabs at Cosenza.[173]

After the Emperor Louis had delivered the Calabrians from the Arabs, he endeavored to break the Neapolitan

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[170] Gay, op. cit., p. 96; Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 18.

[171] Andreas of Bergamo, 227_{24-29}:
"Domine imperator, vestri esse volumus et per vestram defensionem salvi fore confidimus. Gens Sarracinorum venerunt, terra nostra dissipaverunt, civitatis desolaverunt, aecclesias suffuderunt; tantum ad vos petimus, ut des nos caput confortacionis, qui nos adiuvent et confortent. Sacramenta vobis damus, tributa solvimus."

[172] Ibid., 227_{30-31} ("Hotone de finibus Bergomensis, Oschis et Gariardus episcopis").

[173] Ibid., 227_{35-41}.

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alliance with the Arabs by a military demonstration.[174] In this venture the Western emperor failed as the Papacy did on so many occasions earlier and later.[175]

Throughout the winter of 870-871 the siege of Bari was continued. Finally, on February 2, 871, the city fell after a siege of almost five years.[176] The sultan himself was taken prisoner. The role of the Byzantine fleet in this feat is not known. The Western sources are totally silent about it. On the basis of that silence the medievalist Hartmann concluded that the Byzantines played no role at all.[177] I am of the opinion, on the contrary, that the Byzantines played a significant, though indirect, role in the subjugation of the fortress. The achievements of Nicetas in Dalmatia, his policing of the Adriatic, and the presence of his subordinates, Hadrian and Georgius, must not be disregarded.[178] Certainly the mere presence of the

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[174] According to Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 18-19, Louis notified the Duke of Naples, Sergius, as a sovereign to a vassal to release the Bishop Athanasius and also to break his alliance with the Arabs.

[175] On the attempts to break the Neapolitan alliance with the Arabs, John VIII (872-882) worked for many years. See Engreen, Speculum, 20, 322-25.

[176] Erchempert, Historia, ed. G. Waitz in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum (Hanover, 1878), 247_{18-19} ("Misso exercitu Varim cepit, capto in ea Saugdan effero rege cum aliis nonnullis satellitibus suis"); Andreas of Bergamo, 228_{18-20} ("Sequenti mense Febroar., quinto expleto ann. quod Bari possessas habebat domnus imperator, comprehendit Soldanus et reliqui Sarracini ibi consistentibus interemit, ann. 21, indict. 4.").

[177] Hartmann, Geschichte, III, Part I, 288-89, 307-08 (n. 27). Opposed to this view are Gay, op. cit., p. 97; Dvornik, Les Slaves, p. 220.

[178] On the role of these personalities, see above.

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Byzantine fleet in the Adriatic prevented Arab reinforcements from reaching Bari.[179]

After the seizure of Bari by the Western emperor, the Arabs were left with only one important maritime base in southern Italy--the city of Tarentum.[180] In order to complete the task of making his authority in southern Italy real, Louis II planned the reduction of this crucial fortress. Here his hopes were threatened by his lack of an adequate naval force. The Tarentine Arabs could almost indefinitely be reinforced by their co-religionists, either from Sicily (the Emir of Palermo) or from North Africa, via the sea.[181] To overcome this disadvantage, Louis II turned to the Emperor Basil for assistance. It is perhaps at this time (871) that Louis II sent his celebrated letter to Basil.[182]

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[179] On land the Arabs at Bari had been isolated by Louis' earlier offensive--he captured the fortresses of Oria, Canosa, Matera, and Venoza. Consequently, only the sea route was open to the Moslems.

[180] Erchempert, 247₂₀ ("deinde Tarantum obsidere iussit").

[181] Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 19.

[182] Today most scholars accept the authenticity of the letter and accept Gay's dating of February-April, 871 A.D. Opposed to this is A. Kleinclausz, L'Empire carolingien, ses origines et ses transformations (Paris, 1902), pp. 443ff.; Kleinclausz argued that it was not authentic, but written in 879. For literature on the subject, see the following: Hergenrother, op. cit., p. 177; E. Dümmler, Geschichte des Östfränkischen Reiches (Leipzig, 1888), II, 267-71; J. F. Böhmer and E. Mühlbacher, Regesta Imperii, Die Regesten des Kaiserreiches unter den Karolingern (751-918) (Innsbruck, 1899-1908), p. 247; Gay, op. cit., pp. 84-88; Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 19; A. Gasquet, L'Empire byzantin et la monarchie franque (Paris, 1888), pp. 415ff.; W. Henze, "Über den Brief Kaiser Ludwigs II an den Kaiser Basilius I," Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für altere deutsche Geschichts-kunde, 35 (1910), 673ff.; Hartmann, Geschichte, III, Part I, 203ff.; Dölger, Byzanz, pp. 316ff.; Ohnsorge, Abendland und Byzanz, pp. 219-26; Dölger, Regesten, p. 487.

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The letter is a response, dispatched through the papal chancellery, to an earlier letter sent by Basil denying that the Western emperor had the legal right to the imperial title.[183] The letter begins with a legal defense of Louis' claim to the imperial title. Underlying this justification is Louis' attempt to establish a modus vivendi between the two empires.[184]

This hypothesis appears highly probable if one takes into consideration the recent developments in Dalmatia and southern Italy. Perhaps Louis had accepted the fait accompli in Dalmatia, where he could not effectively enforce his will without a fleet, and was now seeking an honorable way to relinquish his claims there. In return he wanted recognition of his imperial title and newly won position in Italy. To

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[183]The letter is found in Chronicon Salernitanum, 521-27. It was probably written by Anastasius the Librarian, for it begins as follows:

> "In nomine domini nostri Jesu Christi Dei aeterne. Lodoguicus divina ordinante providentia imperator augustus Romanorum, dilectissimo spirtualique fratri nostro Basilio gloriosissimo et piissimo atque imperatori novae Romae."

Compare two of Hadrian II's letters to Basil: "Adrianus episcopus, servus servorum Dei, dilectissimo filio, et Christianissimo imperatori Basilio a Deo protecto, semper Augusto" (col. 1276), and "Adrianus episcopus, servus servorum Dei amabili ac piissimo imperatori Basilio Augusto Christianissimo et desiderabilissimo filio" (col. 1286).

[184]The letter of Louis II to Basil, while carefully stressing the Western emperor's position and legal rights to the title of Emperor ("Graeci vero propter kacodoxiam, id est malam opinionem, Romanorum imperatores existere cessaverunt, deserentes videlicet non solum urbem et sedem imperii, sed et gentem Romanan et ipsam quoque linguam penitus amittentes, atque ad aliam urbem, sedem, gentem et linguam per omnia transmigrantes") (Chronicon Salernitanum, p. 524), is not on the whole hostile. As a result, I am of the opinion that Louis II is leaving Basil a great deal of free play for a further reconciliation.

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seal an agreement Louis probably also suggested the resumption of negotiations for a marriage alliance between the two ruling houses. Since both powers had grounds for fearing the Moslem expansion in Sicily, Louis undoubtedly was prepared to assist Basil in his enterprise there.

By 871, all hope of a rapport between the two courts was doomed to failure. Perhaps the insult to Basil in 869, coupled with the embassy of Anastasius the Librarian, was responsible for this.[185] On the other hand, the strengthened Byzantine position in Dalmatia may have given Basil the assurance that once his hands were free in the East he could resume his original objective in the West.[186] As a result of this decision by Basil, relations between Louis II and Byzantium came to an end.

While these negotiations were taking place, Louis, fresh from his conquest of Bari, decided that the time was ripe to make his rule more effective in Italy by imposing his sovereignty over the Lombard princes. To achieve this design, Louis first began by establishing Frankish garrisons in the principal fortresses and cities of the countryside.[187]

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[185] Ohnsorge, Abendland und Byzanz, pp. 219-26, and Dölger, Byzanz, pp. 316ff., place heavy emphasis on the initial misunderstanding as being responsible for the break in relations between the two courts. Gay, op. cit., pp. 98-101, on the other hand, felt that common claims and objectives were the underlying reasons for the break.

[186] Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 19, earlier also felt that Basil was following this policy, perhaps, because he wanted a free hand.

[187] Andreas of Bergamo, 228_{35}-229_{1-6}. The tyranny of Louis' troops is also mentioned by the Lombard chronicler Erchempert, 247_{36}-248_{1-32}.

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According to Hincmar, he even endeavored to depose the Prince of Beneventum, Adelchis, and replace him with a Frank.[188] In his scheme, however, Louis moved either too slowly or with a lack of discretion. The Lombard princes got wind of the plot and prepared their own "vespers."[189] Profiting from the fact that the Frankish garrisons were isolated and scattered, the conspirators struck with relative ease. Louis, who had taken refuge in a tower of the ducal palace of Beneventum, was forced to surrender and was kept a prisoner for some length of time.[190] Whether the Byzantines played any role in the humiliation of the Western ruler is not known for certain, but the empire did profit from it.[191]

Sometime later, after Louis took an oath that he would neither return to Lombard soil nor seek future vengeance, he was released by the Lombard princes.[192] An important factor in the release of the emperor was a new Arab offensive. Apparently, the loss of Bari and Louis' impending

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[188] Hincmar, 492_{41-45} [871].

[189] Included in this plot were Adelchis, Prince of Beneventum, the Count of Spaleto, the Prince of Salerno, and the Duke of Naples.

[190] Andreas of Bergamo, 229_{1-2}, says: "Dies 35, id est Id. August. usque quintodecimo Kalend. Octobr. indict. 5." Erchempert, 247_{34}, says "40 dies." According to the legendary account of the De administrando imperio, 130-34, Souldan (the Emir of Bari) played a key role in the conspiracy.

[191] Gay, op. cit., p. 102 (n. 6), states that the Chronicon Reginonis hints at this.

[192] Ibid., p. 103; Amari, Storia, I, 384-88.

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threat on Tarentum caused the Moslems in Italy to seek aid from their co-religionists in North Africa and Sicily. The North African ruler, Mohammed ibn Ahmad ibn al-Alglab, responded to this urgent plea by sending Abdallah ibn Ya'qub to Italy. Probably in the autumn of 871 Abdallah landed in Calabria with an expeditionary force of 20,000-30,000 men.[193] He captured a few cities in Calabria initially and then turned to the task of subjugating the rest of southern Italy. He commenced with the siege of Salerno while, at the same time, sending flying columns into the countryside. Some of these detachments reached as far as Naples. Two of them even threatened the Lombard cities of Beneventum and Capua.

Since the Lombard princes were unable to cope with the Moslem offensive, they had little choice but to remain on the defensive behind their fortifications and hope for the best. Adelchis, the Prince of Beneventum, was an exception to this rule. He took up the challenge and inflicted a severe reverse on an Arab column, killing 3,000.[194] The rulers of Salerno and Capua were not as fortunate. As their situation grew more desperate, they turned to the only person who they thought could save them--Louis II. In return for

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[193]Ibn 'Idārī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 215), A.H. 257 (November 870-17 November 871).

[194]According to Erchempert, 248_{4-6}, one column was defeated by Adelchis and one by Lambert ("Occisis ex eis pene tribus milibus viris; quibus etiam diebus Capuani iuxta Suessulam mille ex eis peremerunt").

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this assistance, Guaiferius, the Prince of Salerno, and Landolf, the Prince and Bishop of Capua, were prepared to do homage to Louis.[195]

Burning with a desire to avenge his humiliation, Louis wrote to Pope Hadrian II begging the Pontiff to release him from the oath he had taken under duress.[196] According to the chronicle of Regino, however, he was not absolved from his oath until he came to Rome. The chronicler writes:

> In the year of our Lord's incarnation, 872, the Emperor Louis came to Rome and there in an assembly he laid his complaints against Adelchis in the presence of the Pope. Then, by the senate of the Romans, Adelchis was declared a tyrant and enemy of the republic, and war was decreed against him. By the authority of God and St. Peter, Hadrian [calls him John] absolved the emperor from the oath he had taken, saying that what he had done under compulsion, to avoid danger of death, was not binding, and that that could not be called an oath which was devised against the safety of the republic.[197]

On the following day (May 18, 872) Louis was crowned by the Pope as king of that portion of Lothaire's kingdom which

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[195] Gay, op. cit., p. 104.

[196] Hincmar, pp. 492-94 ("Mandans apostolico Adriano, ut obviam illi in transitu itineris sui veniret, quatenus de ipso sacramento illum et suos absolveret.").

[197] Chronicon Reginonis, ed. G. Pertz in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptorum (Hanover, 1829), I, 584$_{33-42}$ [872]:

> "Anno dominicae incarnationis 872, Hlodowicus imperator Romam venit, ibique conventum celebrans, coram summo pontifice multa super Adalgisi tyrannide conquestus est. Tunc a senatu Romanorum idem Adalgisus tyrannus atque hostes reipublicae declaratur, bellum etiam adversus eum deceinitur. Iohannes papa imperatorem a iuramento quo se obligaverat, auctoritate Dei et sancti Petri absolvit, adfirmans nihil sibi obesse, quod ab mortis periculum evadendum caactus fecerat, nes sacramentum esse dicendum, quod contra salutem reipublicae, quamvis cum multis execrationibus, fuerit prolatum."

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Louis the German had restored to him.[198] By this visit to Rome, Louis, therefore, profited a great deal.

Desiring to regain his influence in the south, Louis left for Campania, which was severely threatened by the Moslem offensive. In the face of this danger Louis put aside his desire for vengeance.[199] In 872 the emperor's forces inflicted an overwhelming defeat on the Moslems at San Martino near Capua.[200] This victory led Abd al-Malek, who had succeeded the dead Abdallah, to raise the siege of Salerno and sail off.[201] This victory restored, at least partially, the position of the Western emperor in southern Italy. The principalities of Salerno and Capua continued in their loyalty to Louis. Landolf, the Prince-Bishop of Capua, became a sort of chief agent of the emperor.[202] On the other hand, the Emperor Louis could not alter the position of the Campanian city states. Duke Sergius of Naples, for example, not only rejected the emperor's pleas for cooperation against the enemy, but maintained his friendly ties

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[198] Kleinclausz, op. cit., p. 433; Gay, op. cit., p. 104.

[199] John the Deacon, Gesta Episcoporum Neapolitanorum, ed. G. Waitz in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum (Hanover, 1878), p. 435, for instance, says that Athanasius (the Bishop of Naples in exile) implored Louis to put aside his differences with the Lombards of Beneventum and turn his arms on the Saracens. Seemingly this is a good conjecture, for in 873 John VIII finally did reconcile Louis to Adelchis.

[200] Andreas of Bergamo, 228_{30} ("Ad Sancto Martino, ad strada scilice prope Capua ad Vulturno.").

[201] Cambridge Chronicle, Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 99.

[202] Gay, op. cit., p. 106; Hartmann, Geschichte, III, Part I, 293-97.

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with the Moslems. The Western emperor achieved little there except that he brought about the liberation of Saint Athanasius, who had been exiled by his nephew, Duke Sergius, on Sorrento.[203] Louis' attempts at reconciliation with Adelchis, the Prince of Beneventum, also proved a dismal failure. Even the intervention of Pope John VIII (872-882), the successor of Hadrian II, was of no avail.[204] Exhausted by his ceaseless efforts to secure Italy from Arab incursions and make his authority real, Louis retired to the north. Here, on August 12, 875, at Brescia, he died a broken man who was no closer to his goals at his death than when he had started out.[205]

Before Louis died, the dissension between Adelchis and the Western emperor brought definite results for the Emperor Basil, especially as the Arab menace grew more intense. Unwilling to seek aid which might mean the loss of his independent position, Adelchis, the Prince of Beneventum, turned to Constantinople, as had his forebear, Arichis, earlier.[206] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, who is often misinformed about

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[203] Gay, op. cit., p. 107. Athanasius was Bishop of Naples. Since he opposed the pro-Arab policy of his nephew, he was exiled to Sorrento. According to the Vita Athanasii, ed. G. Waitz in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Langabardicarum (Hanover, 1878), 448_{37-38}, he died on July 15, 872 ("Idus Iulii, indictione quinta regnante Basilio imperatore.").

[204] Gay, op. cit., p. 107.

[205] Andreas of Bergamo, 229_{24-25} ("Sequenti autem mense August. Hludowicus imperator defunctus est, pridie Idus Agust., in finibus Bresiana.").

[206] On the policy of Arichis, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 311ff.; Gay, op. cit., pp. 109-10.

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Italian events, records this.[207] He writes: "They [the Lombards] send envoys to the emperor of the Romans, asking that he [Basil] should give them aid and deliver them out of this danger."[208] Returning in triumph from his Paulician campaign, Basil welcomed the prospects of this embassy as a stepping stone for his intervention in Italian politics. According to the Western chronicler Hincmar, a patrician with a Greek force arrived at Otranto in 873.[209]

The initial activities of this expeditionary force in Italy are unfortunately unknown. It may have tackled the task of securing the lines of communication to Otranto. This would logically have been the first step to be undertaken before any major offensive was launched. This conjecture is substantiated by the fact that the wealthy town of Oria returned to the Byzantine fold. As I have already stated, this town was taken by Louis II in 867, but the

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[207] On the validity of Constantine on Italian events, see Hirsch, op. cit., pp. 258-60. Also see D.A.I. Commentary, p. 102, and introductory note to chap. xxix, pp. 105-06, ll. 159-216.

[208] De administrando imperio, pp. 132, 170-72. See, also, Vita Basilii, p. 296; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, p. 224. Very frequently, on Italy, Constantine adds some erroneous information. For example, he says that her diplomatic agent was captured by Soldan. The tale of the messenger, however, recalls a similar scene which is found in Paul the Deacon. Elsewhere he says that "from that time until this day the men of Capua and Beneventum have been under the authority of the Romans." This, of course, is wrong, for Beneventum did not become Byzantine until 891. On this, see Gay, op. cit., p. 147; S. Runciman, Romanus Lecapenus (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 187-93.

[209] Hincmar, 495_{48-50} [873] ("Pervento patricio imperatoris Graecorum cum hoste in civitate, quae Hydrontus dicitur in auxilium Beneventanorum, Hludowicus, imperator Italiae, in Capua residens, mortus iam Landberto calvo.").

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Jewish chronicler Ahimaaz writes:

> In the 800th year after the destruction of the holy city and temple . . . there arose a king named Basil . . . who tried to turn them [the Jews] from the Torah, and to convert them to the worthless religion. He sent couriers and horsemen throughout his realm. . . . The messengers of the king went through the land as far as the harbor of Otranto. . . . They traversed the province from end to end, finally reaching the city of Oria.[210]

This is further corroborated by the Cambridge Chronicle, which dates it more precisely to the year 873-874.[211] Since this edict of Basil could not have been carried out unless the Byzantines were in control of this area, the Greek forces probably restored communications in this region as soon as they arrived.

The success of the Byzantines in Otranto must have come as unpleasant news to the Arabs, since it endangered their position in Tarentum. In 875 the Arabs launched a new offensive by both land and sea. Obviously they had used the respite during the years 873-875 to regroup their forces. An Arab naval force even raided the town of Grado in the Gulf of Trieste.[212] The stubborn resistance of the

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[210] Chronicle of Ahimaaz, ed. and trans. M. Salzman (New York, 1924), pp. 69ff. The year 868 given by the chronicler is apocryphal to correspond with the fall of Jerusalem (868-800 = 68 A.D.).

[211] Cambridge Chronicle, p. 32 (Ἔτους ,ϛτπβ' [6382 = 873-874] ἐβαπτίσθησαν οἱ ἑβραῖοι ἰνδ... γ'.). See, also, Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 100. Pseudo-Symeon, 691₈₋₉, places it ambiguously in the regnal year 7-8 (874-875) (τῷ ϛ' καὶ τῷ η' αὐτοῦ ἔτει βαπτίζει ὁ βασίλειος πάντας τοὺς ὑπὸ χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἑβραίους).

[212] John of Venice, M.G.H. SS., VII, 19₅₂-20₁₋₅: "Circa hec tempora Sarraceni advenientes, Gradensem urbem capere conati sunt. Sed civibus fortiter decertantibus, Sarracenorum impietas non prevaluit. Tamen cum duobus predictam urbem diebus obsedissent, denunciatum est domno

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inhabitants and the speedy arrival of the Doge's forces compelled them to raise the siege and withdraw. On their return, however, the Arabs managed to ravage the town of Commachio, north of Ravenna (July, 877 A.D.).[213] On land, the Arab forces had used Tarentum as their point of departure. Led by Othman, they pillaged virtually the entire southern part of the peninsula. Some of their detachments got as far as Bari and Canense, while others ravaged the environs of Beneventum and then pillaged the towns of Talesa and Alipha.[214]

As this offensive also threatened Apulia, the Lombards of Bari turned to the Byzantines at Otranto for aid. The Byzantine general Gregorius, who is given the title Bajulus by the Latin sources, came immediately.[215] On December 25, 875, the Byzantines entered the fortress without resistance

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Urso duci; qui instanter Johannem filium suum adversus eosdem cum navali exercitu misit. Quod dum Sarraceni sorte investigarent, protinus recedentes ab urbe, Cumaclensem [Commachio] villam depopulati sunt."

[213]This mentioned by the chronicler Andreas of Bergamo, 229_{23} ("Deinde in mense Iul. Sarracini venerunt et civitate Cummaclo [Commachio] igne cremaverunt.").

[214]Erchempert, 249_{6-13} ("Coeperunt pedetemptim Varim et Canense territorium depredare, . . . egressusque Beneventum graviter depredavit et Talesam et Alipham.").

[215]Gregorius is called Bajulus by Lupus Protospatarius, pp. 52-53 ("Gregorius stratico qui et baiulus dicebatur") and also by Pope John VIII in Jaffe, No. 3239 ("gloriosus primicerius et imperialis bajulus"). This title appears early; for example, Theophanes, 96_{18-20}, refers to Antiochos, the prefect of the East (444), by this title also (Ἀντιόχου τὸν πραίποσιτον καὶ πατρίκιον, τὸν καὶ Βάγυχον αὐτοῦ). During the reign of Constantine VI and Irene (ibid., 465_3), a John held this title (790 A.D.).

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and immediately sent the chief men of the city to Constantinople as hostages.[216] Since the danger from the Arabs was still at hand, the Byzantines endeavored to create a coalition to halt the Moslem drive and sent an embassy to Beneventum, Capua, and Salerno.[217] In the endeavor to create a united front against the Moslems, the Byzantines failed as Louis II had earlier. As long as the Byzantine Empire remained a distant force, the Lombards were willing to call upon its assistance and to cooperate, but when the power of the empire became a real force in Italian politics, they altered their position and negotiated instead with the Arabs.[218] This above all illustrates how the desire of the small Italian states to maintain their independence was the principal stumbling block preventing a united policy against the Moslems.

The maritime predominance of the Arabs in the western part of the Mediterranean also affected the position of the Papacy. While Louis II lived, he served as the grand protector of Pope John VIII against the Moslems.[219] His death

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[216] Lupus Protospatarius, 52-53 [875] ("Intraverunt Graeci in Baro mense Decembr. die natalis Domini, feria 3 Gregorius stratico, qui et baiulus dicebatur."); Annales Beneventani, ed. G. Pertz in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptorum (Hanover, 1838), III, 174 [876] ("Intraverunt Greci in Bari, Missi a Leone et Alexio imperatoribus, mense Decembri ").

[217] Erchempert, 249$_{18-19}$.

[218] Gay, op. cit., p. 104; Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 58.

[219] On John VIII, the following works are available: P. Balan, Il pontificato di Giovanni VIII (Rome, 1880); A. Gasquet, Jean VIII et la fin de l'empire carolingienne (Clermont-Feirand, 1886); A. Lapôtre, L'Europe et le Saint-Siège a l'époque carolingienne (Paris, 1890); L. Duchesne,

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in 875 occurred at a time when the Moslem menace was critical. Not since the 840's had the situation been graver for the Holy See. Without substantial naval or military forces at his disposal, the Pope could do little but to appeal for outside assistance. A letter to the Emperor Charles the Bald[220] in 876 gives a sad picture of how the Arab outrage affected the Holy See. The Pope writes:

> Were all the leaves of the forest turned to tongues, they could not tell of all the troubles we are suffering at the hands of the Arabs. . . . The blood of Christians is being shed. A people devoted to God is being destroyed through constant slaughter. The one who escapes fire or sword, becomes booty, led into captivity and becomes an exile forever. Cities, fortresses and villages, denuded of inhabitants, have perished. The bishops have scattered in different directions. . . . The threshold of the Princes of the Apostles are the only places they have to turn to for refuge, as their houses have become the dens of wild beasts. Homeless wanderers, no longer have they to preach but to beg. . . . In distress, rather in ruin, is the mistress of nations, the Queen of cities, the Mother of Churches. . . . In the year that has passed we sowed the seed, but did not gather in the harvest. This year as we have not planted we have not even a hope of reaping. But why do we speak of the infidels when Christians do no better? We allude especially to those on our borders whom you call Margaues or Marquises. . . . You must come and help the church, which,

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Les premiers temps de l'Etal Pontifical (Paris, 1898); Gay, op. cit., pp. 104-30; Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 55-59, 74-78; Hartmann, Geschichte, III, Part I, 1-95; Amari, Storia, I, 576-606; Kleinclausz, op. cit., pp. 460-78; A. Flicke, "Les origines de l'action de la Papauté en vue de la Crusade," Revue d'histoire Ecclesiastique (1938), pp. 765-75; Engreen, Speculum, 20, 318-30.

[220] Charles the Bald was crowned emperor on December 25, 875. Hincmar, 498_{30-33} [875]:

> "Carolus autem, quibusdam de primoribus ex Italia ad se non venientibus, pluribus autem receptis, Romam invitante Papa Johanne perrexit, et 16. Kal. Januarii ab eo cum gloria magna in ecclesia sancte Petri susceptus est."

498_{34-36} [876] ("In die nativitatis Domini beato Petro multa et pretiosa munera offerens, in imperatorem unctus et coronatus atque Romanorum imperator appellatus est.").

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> setting aside for you a good and great brother, freely choose you as another David for the imperial scepter. . . . If this church is brought low not only will the glory of your empire totter, but the greatest loss will accrue to the Christian faith.[221]

As no aid came and the situation grew more desperate, John VIII wrote the Emperor Charles about the menacing danger in 877: "The whole of Campania is completely devastated by the God-forsaken Arabs; they are already secretly crossing the Tiburtina to Rome and they are plundering the Sabine region as well as the adjacent localities."[222] From these letters one can readily see the gravity of the papal position even though John's pleas may perhaps be a little rhetorical.

Owing to the impotence of Charles and the dissensions among the princes of southern Italy, these efforts brought Pope John only token assistance. Consequently he decided to petition the Byzantines, whose position had become more secure since the fall of Bari. At first (877) John asked the Byzantine strategos Gregorius for only ten warships to defend the coast.[223] Considering the fact that John

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[221] Initially John called on Duke Boso, Charles' representative in the north, for assistance. However, bent on personal aggrandizement, he never came. That is why John turned to Charles. John VIII, Epistolae, ed. Migne, P.L. 126, letter XLIII, cols. 696-97.

[222] Ibid., letter LVIII, col. 711D:
"Ad Carolum Calvum imperatorem (anno 877) quia tota Campania ab ipsis Deo odibilibus Saracenis funditus devastata, jam fluvium qui a Tiburtina urbe Romam decurrit, furtim transeunt, et tam Sabinos quam sibi adjacentia loca praedantur."

[223] Ibid., letter LXXII (April 17, 877), col. 727B ("Ut vel decem bona et expedita chelandia ad portum nostrum transmittas, ad littora nostra de illis furibus et piratis Arabibus expurganda.").

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continually implored Charles to come with all his forces to Italy in order to save the world and Christianity from the Moslem menace, this seems like double-dealing. In 877 the Pope had not yet given up the prospects of Western intervention.

All this while John, despite his age and ill health, was not merely seeking aid from others. He did all he could with his limited resources to help himself. He built a small naval squadron with which he patrolled the coast. In addition, John tried to infuse his own fighting spirit into his men.[224] From all indications he was to a degree successful in this. He even inflicted a substantial defeat on an Arab fleet off the promontory of Arce, capturing eighteen vessels, slaying many of the enemy, and liberating 600 captives.[225]

What had, above all, facilitated the Arab menace was the friendliness of many of the southern Italian princes. While the towns of Naples, Gaeta, and Amalfi lived in peace with the Moslems, others were in actual alliance with them.[226] John, regardless of ill health and old age, worked relentlessly to eliminate these alliances between the Christian princes and the Moslems. In 876 he scored at least a partial

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[224] Ibid., letter CCCXXXVI, col. 939 ("Dromones videlicet cum cateris navibus construentes, et catera vasa bellica et apparatus, quin potius et ipsos animos hominum praeparantes, et adversus hostiles incursus indesinenter armantes.").

[225] Ibid., letter CCCXXXIV (882), col. 939.

[226] Gay, op. cit., pp. 114-15; Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 38.

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success by detaching Guaiferius of Salerno and Landolf, the Prince-Bishop of Capua.[227] Elsewhere he was not so successful.

Amalfi, for instance, promised to furnish Pope John with a naval force to protect the papal territory between Terracina and Civita-Vecchia. In return the Amalfians were to receive a subsidy of 10,000 mancuses from the papacy. It happened frequently that while papal subsidies were made, no fleet ever arrived.[228] John VIII had no better success in Naples. Although he financed and engineered a coup d'etat against the pro-Moslem Sergius and facilitated the election of Bishop Athanasius (the Duke's brother) as the new duke, John VIII had no luck; neither papal subsidies nor threats of excommunication could bring Athanasius (877-878) to break his ties with the Moslems.[229] Added to these frustrations, John suffered a further humiliation when he was attacked by Lambert, Duke of Spoleto, and was not only forced to flee the city of Rome but had to pay an annual tribute to the Moslems as well.[230]

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[227] On the detachment of Capua and Salerno, see Gay, op. cit., pp. 115-17.

[228] Ibid., p. 118.

[229] Ibid., pp. 118-19; Engreen, Speculum, 20, 318-30. Fear of its loss of independence was undoubtedly a factor in the policy of the Duke of Naples, but economics should not be overlooked.

[230] Gay, op. cit., pp. 119-22. The tribute was 25,000 mancuses.

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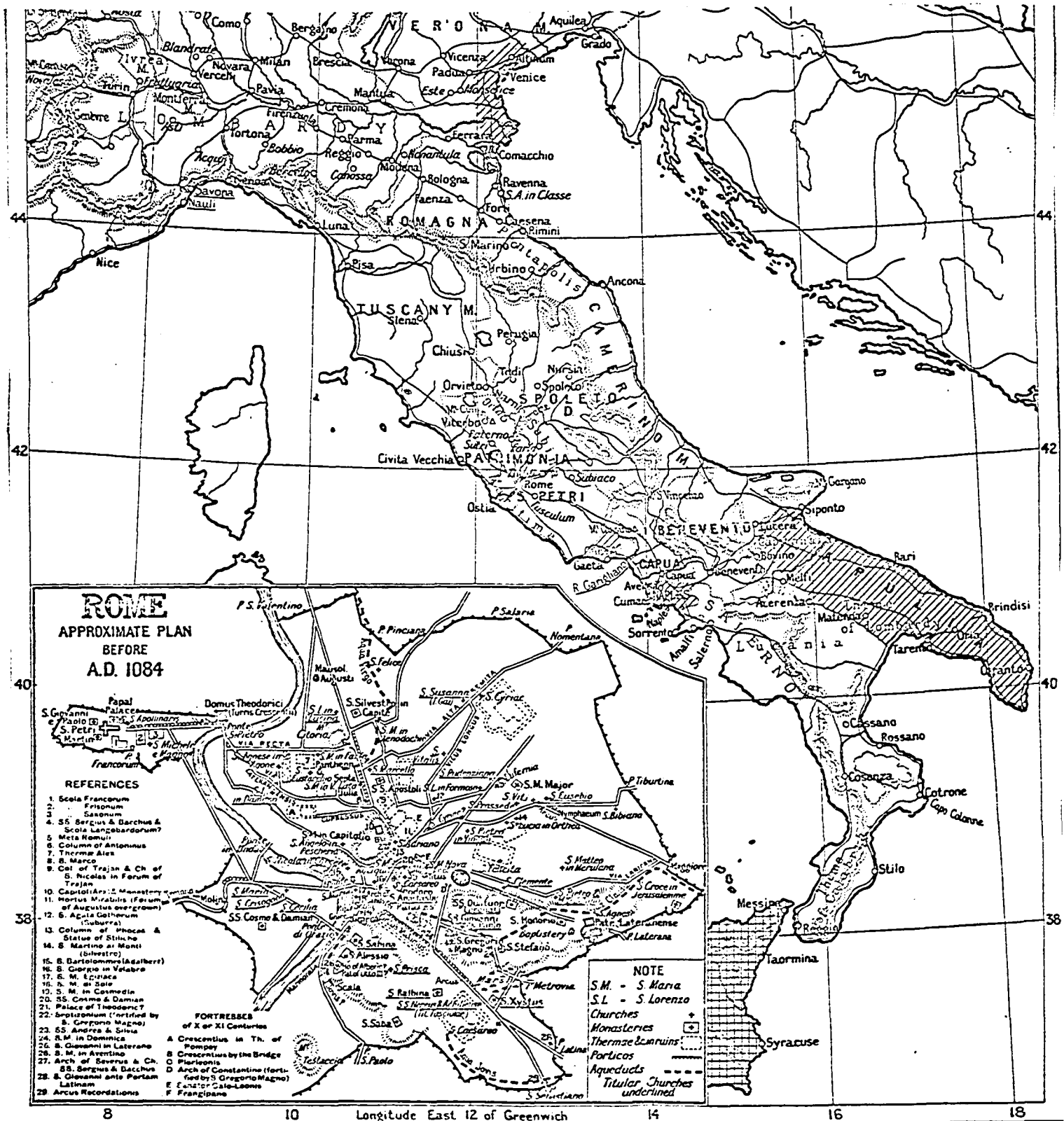
ROME
APPROXIMATE PLAN
BEFORE
A.D. 1084
REFERENCES
1. Scola Francorum
2. Frisonum
3. Saxonum
4. SS. Sergius & Bacchus & Scola Langebardorum?
5. Meta Romuli
6. Column of Antoninus
7. Thermae Alex
8. S. Marco
9. Col of Trajan & Ch of S. Nicolas in Forum of Trajan
10. Capitol Arch
11. Hortus Mirabilis (Forum of Augustus overgrown)
12. S. Agata Gotherum (Suburra)
13. Column of Phocas & Statue of Stilicho
14. S. Martino ai Monti (Silvestro)
15. S. Bartolommeo (Adalbert)
16. S. Georgio in Velabro
17. S. M. Epifania
18. S. M. ai Sole
19. S. M. in Cosmedin
20. SS. Cosma & Damian
21. Palace of Theodoric?
22. Septizonium (fortified by S. Gregorio Magno)
23. SS. Andrea & Silvia
24. S. M. in Domnica
25. S. Giovanni in Laterano
26. S. M. in Aventino
27. Arch of Severus & Ch. SS. Sergius & Bacchus
28. S. Giovanni ante Portam Latinam
29. Arcus Recordationis
FORTRESSES of X or XI Centuries
A Crescentius in Th. of Pompey
B Crescentius by the Bridge
C Pierleonis
D Arch of Constantine (fortified by S. Gregorio Magno)
E Cencius Cafarelli
F Frangipane
NOTE
S.M. - S. Maria
S.L. - S. Lorenzo
Churches +
Monasteries
Thermae & ruins
Porticos
Aqueducts
Titular Churches underlined
Papal Palace
Domus Theodorici (Turris Crescentii)
Maurol. Augusti
Mausoleum Hadriani
Pons Aelius
Pons Sublicius
Pons Neronianus
Pons Cestius
Pons Fabricius
Pons Janiculensis
Pons Aurelius
Pons Milvius
Pons Salarius
Pons Nomentanus
Pons Triumphalis
Pons Valentinianus
Pons Antonini
Pons Agrippae
Pons Aemilius
Pons Sublicius

When John returned to the city of Rome in 879, he found, to his dismay, that the political situation had deteriorated even further. During his absence Syracuse fell to the Arabs, facilitating even more Arab reinforcements to their co-religionists in Italy. The misery and anarchy in southern Italy increased at an alarming rate. The Duke of Naples' attitude toward the Moslems certainly made their task easier. Athanasius actually furnished them with a refuge between the so-called Portus Aequoreus and the walls of the city. With this sanctuary serving as a base, the Moslems plundered the territories of Beneventum, Spoleto, and Rome with impunity.[231]

Despite all of the difficulties he had to face from the Arabs at his own doors and from the Duke of Spoleto, John did not hesitate to leave Rome and to travel virtually from one end of the peninsula to the other.[232] In order to alter this situation he exhausted every means at his disposal: he wrote letters, sent legates, gave subsidies, and even used his powers of excommunication.[233]

Occasionally some consolation was afforded to the Pope by success. In some instances, one may question whether it was John's relentless energy, the Moslem menace, or a

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[231] Erchempert, 251_3-252_1 ("Cum Saracenis pacem iniens ac primum infra portum aequorem et urbis murum collocans, omnem terram Beneventanam simulque Romanam necnon et partem Spoletii dirruentes.").

[232] In August, 879, he was at Ravenna. In October he was at Gaeta. Later he was at Capua, etc. Gay, op. cit., pp. 118-23.

[233] Ibid., pp. 124-31, 136-38.

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combination of the two which brought about this change. Be that as it may, it had positive results, for a rapprochement followed between the new prince of Beneventum, Gaiderius, and the Byzantines. In 879 the Byzantine strategos Gregorius and Gaiderius even journeyed to Nola, where they met Guaiferius, the Prince of Salerno, and the new ruler of Capua, Pandonolf. Some delays prevented the arrival of the Pope himself.[234] Nevertheless, the meeting at Nola can be taken as an important turning point for the Byzantines in Italy. By this time the Lombard princes and the Papacy had come to look upon the Byzantines as their sole protectors and the only hope for Italy's salvation.[235] The contrast between the growing strength of the Byzantines and the increasing weakness of the Western emperors was a decisive factor in this diplomatic victory for the empire.

If the power of the Byzantines was growing in Italy by 879, even greater strength was forthcoming. Basil had by this time achieved a considerable degree of success in the East. The respite which followed gave Basil the opportunity to turn his attention to the West again. This time the emperor planned a large-scale expedition by both land and sea, not just a token demonstration. Unfortunately for the Byzantines, the empire suffered an irreparable loss in the fall of Syracuse (878) while these preparations were under way. Encouraged by this success, the Moslems advanced

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[234] Erchempert, 250$_{16-38}$.

[235] On this, see Gay, op. cit., pp. 122-26, 137-41.

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eastward, threatening the emperor's position in the Peloponnesus.[236] In 879 the Emir of Africa sent a fleet of sixty warships into the Ionian Sea, where they pillaged the islands of Zakynthos and Cephallania.[237] While these developments were taking place, the Byzantine Admiral Nasar had already departed with orders from Basil to sweep the seas clean of the corsairs. Taking advantage of a favorable wind, Nasar quickly arrived at Methone. Here a serious delay occurred,[238] for many of his crews mutinied and fled into the interior. According to the Greek sources, they were eventually hunted down by the imperial forces and sent to Constantinople. As an example to deter any further incidents of such a nature, the mutineers were first humiliated in the Hippodrome and then returned to the strategos of the Peloponnesus, John the Cretan, who was under orders to impale them.[239]

While the mutinous crews were being hunted down and punished, the Byzantine inactivity gave the Arabs an opportunity to continue their devastation of the coastal districts

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[236] Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 353.

[237] Vita Basilii, 302_{1-5} (Ναῦς ἑξήκοντα τὸν ἀριθμὸν... καὶ πολλὰ σώματα λαμβάνων αἰχμάλωτα ὄχρι κεφαληνίας καὶ Ζακύνθου...); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 229_{3-8}; Genesius, 118_{8-13}.

[238] Vita Basilii, 302_{5-11}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 229_{8-15}; Genesius, 118_{13-15}. Compare Pseudo-Symeon, 666_{8-10}. On Nasar, see, also, Guilland, Institutions, I, 537. According to Guilland, the Nasar here is the same as the one who defeated the Arabs under Basil.

[239] Vita Basilii, 302-03; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 229. Only Constantine, 303_{14-15}, gives the name of the strategos of the Peloponnesus (Ἰωάννης ὁ στρατηγὸς ἐπετράπη πελοποννήσου, ὁ λεγόμενος κρητικός.)

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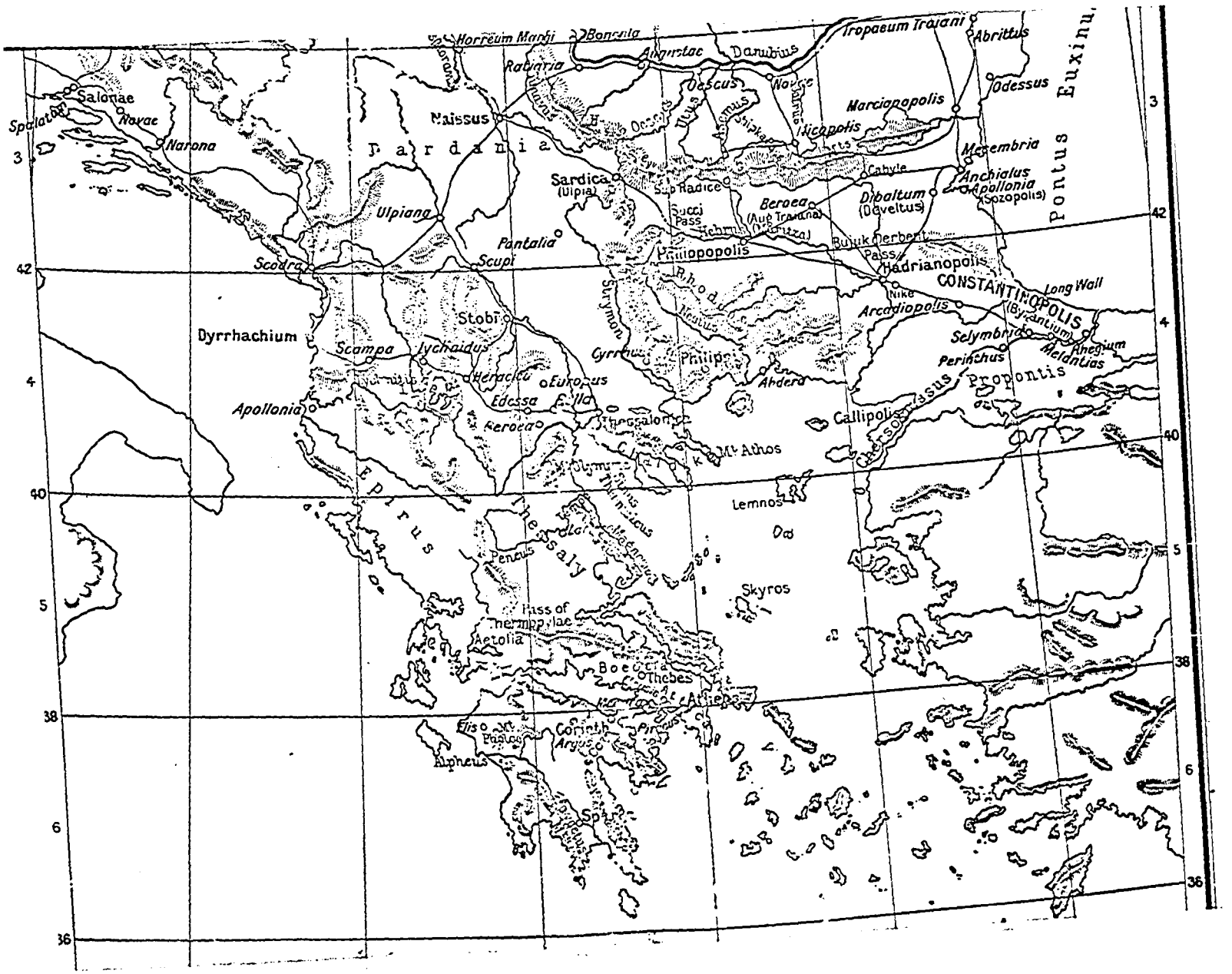

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and the islands. Nasar quickly enlisted more men from the Peloponnesians, among whom were some Mardaites, and resumed the offensive.[240] Catching the Moslems off their guard one night, the Byzantine admiral executed a brilliant if dangerous attack and inflicted a complete defeat. A large part of the Moslem fleet, together with the crews, was apparently burnt by Greek fire. What survived the attack was captured and brought by Nasar to Methone, where he donated it as a gift to the Church.[241]

Sweeping the Ionian Sea clean of Moslem warships and insuring the safety of Greece was only one part of the Byzantine admiral's objective. From here he proceeded into Sicilian waters.[242] A vanguard, under a certain Eupraxius, even ravaged the region of Palermo and its environs.[243] During this enterprise a large number of Moslem merchantmen were captured, carrying in their holds precious cargoes among which was olive oil. According to the historian

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[240] Vita Basilii, 303_{23}-304_{1-3} (Ἐν τούτῳ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ λεῖπον τῆς στρατείας, ἀπὸ τῶν κατὰ Πελοπόννησον στρατιωτῶν καὶ Μαρδαϊτῶν ἀναπληρώσας...); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 230_{5-8}.

[241] Vita Basilii, 303_{3-19}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 230_{8-19}.

[242] The Vita Basilii states that Nasar consulted Basil before he moved on. This, however, seems improbable, considering the rapidity of Nasar's movements. Again Constantine is probably trying to exalt his grandfather.

[243] Georgius Continuatus, 845_{6-7} (Οὗτος Εὐπραξίου στρατηλάτου εἰς Σικελίαν,); Vita Basilii, 304_{20-23}

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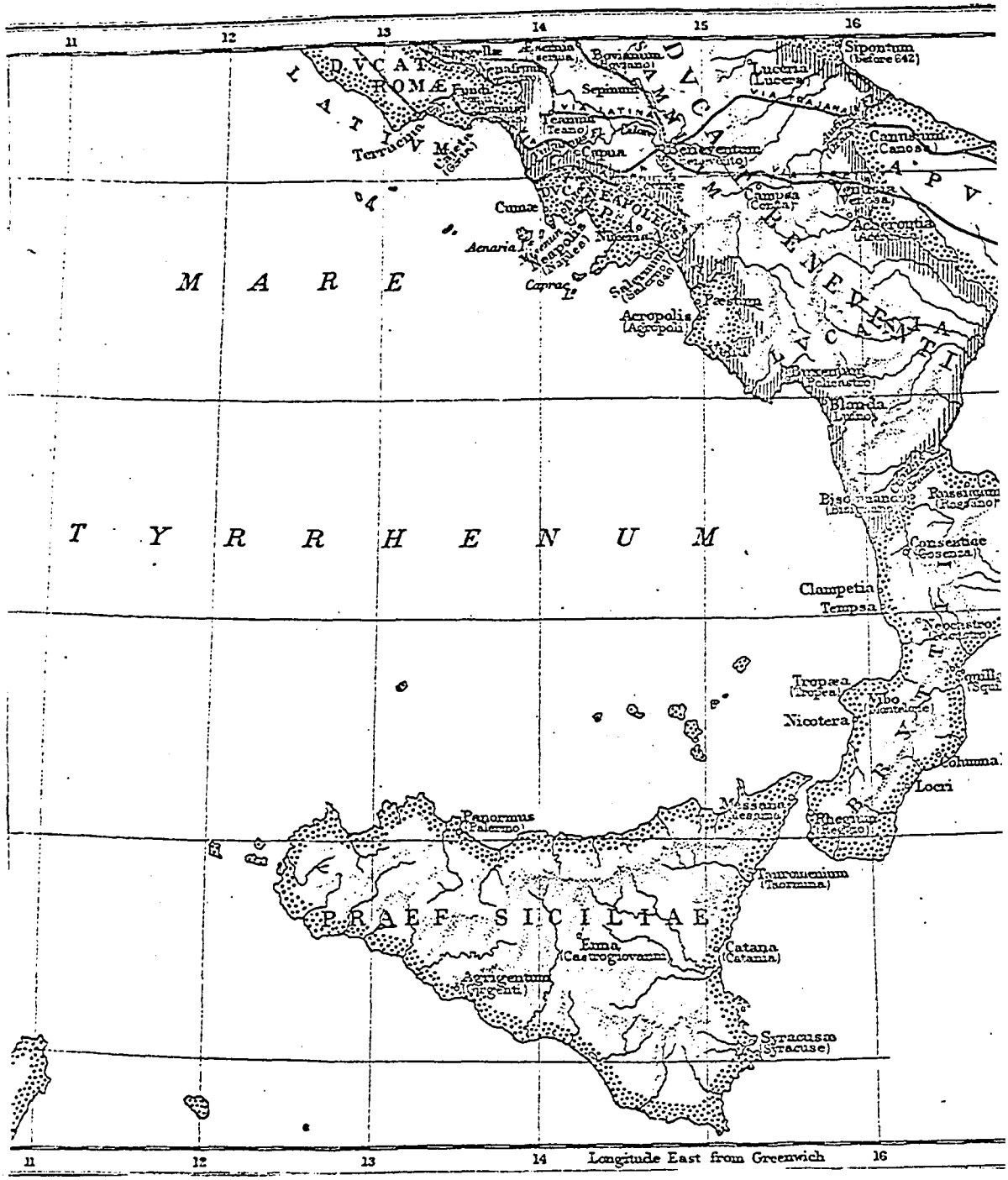

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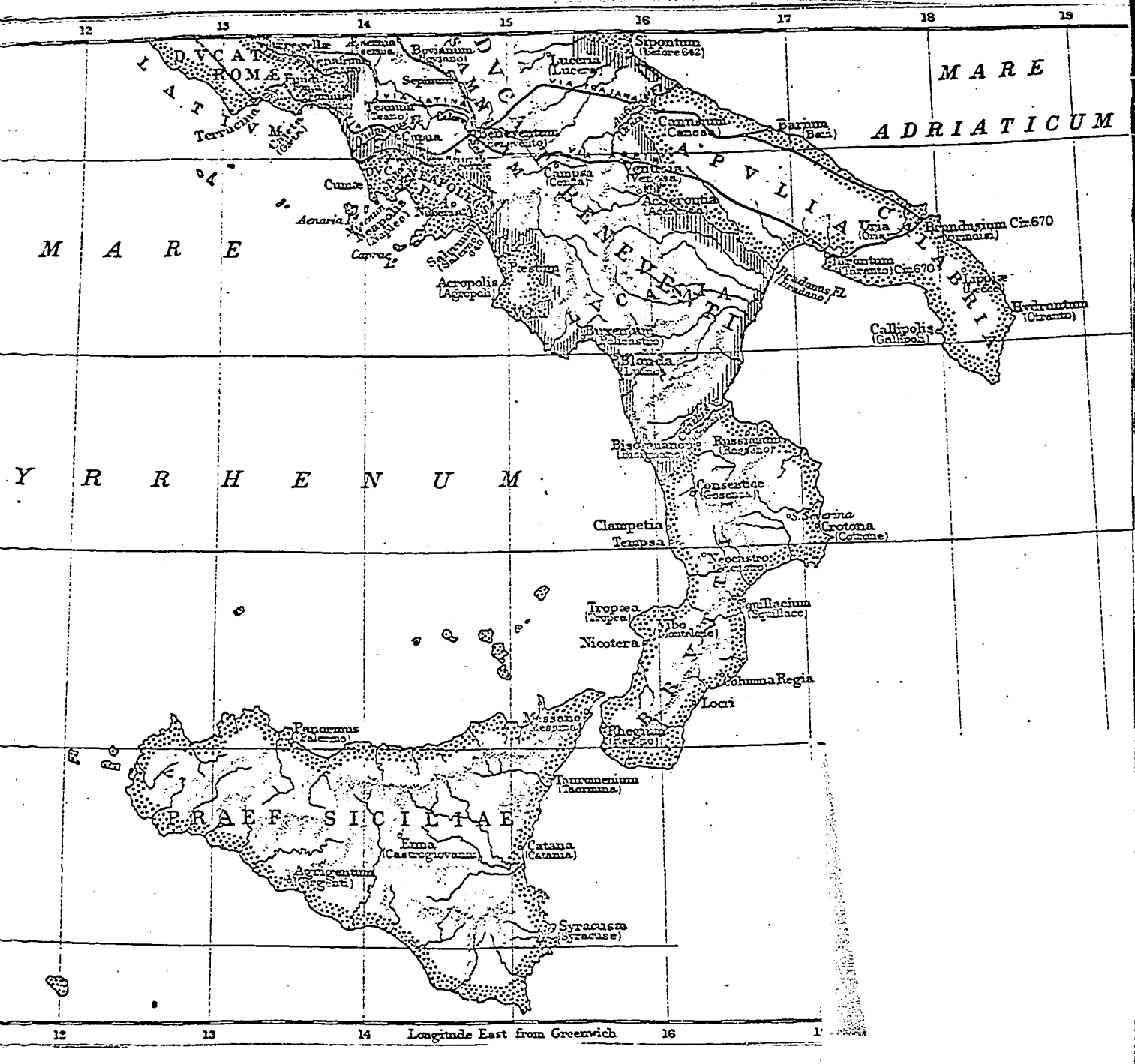

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Genesius, such a large quantity of oil was taken as spoils that the price of this commodity fell to an obol per measure.[244]

While the vanguard was preoccupied with these activities, Nasar himself proceeded to Rhegium.[245] Perhaps his objective was to secure the Strait of Messina before advancing any further. Once this was accomplished, Nasar advanced into the Tyrrhenian Sea, where his purpose was to drive the Moslem warships from this area and prevent Arab reinforcements from reaching Italy. The African Moslems did not remain inactive during this period. Instead, they tried to retrieve the situation by sending a large fleet into this area, perhaps to intercept Nasar. Nasar annihilated this force near a place called Stilo (στήλαι) in 880.[246] This

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[244] Genesius, 120_{8-16}; Vita Basilii, 204_{2}-305_{1-3}.

[245] Vita S. Eliae Junioris, in Acta Sanctorum. Aug. III, 494 (chap. xxiii):
"Per id tempus cum Agarenorum princeps classem aciemque instrueret adversus Rheginos, Christianissimus imperator Basilium quemdam, cognomento Nasar ducem constituit ac Rhegium cum quadraginta quinque navibus ad obsistendum hosti mittit."

[246] Vita Basilii, 305_{8-10} (ἐπεὶ οὖν τοῖς προκαταλαμβανομένοις πρόθυμος ἦν στρατός, διαπεραιοῦται πρὸς Σικελίαν καὶ Πάνορμον, καὶ τὰς ἐνταῦθα πόλεις . . .); Cambridge Chronicle, p. 33 (879-880) (ἐπίασαν οἱ χριστιανοὶ τὰ καράμια τῶν σαρακηνῶν εἰς τὸ ἑλλάδιν...). Saint Elias predicted this victory; Vita S. Eliae Junioris, 494 (chap. xxiii) ("Tum Elias, utpote cuius perspicacissimam mentis aciem divinus splendor illustrasset, omnibus liquido praedicabat et Graecorum victoriam ac cladem Agarenorum."). The place is described as at Milazzo. See Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 77 (n. 1); Eickhoff, op. cit., pp. 237ff.

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victory was of great benefit for the Byzantines and the Papacy. For the former it meant not only a raise in morale, but the ability to continue the land offensive without interruption. For the latter it was important because the victory enabled the Byzantines to answer the pleas of John VIII. Following the victory of Nasar, a Byzantine detachment under the Spatharius Gregorius, the turumarch Theophylact, and the Count Diogenes advanced to the vicinity of Naples, where it won a victory over the Arab land forces.[247] As this made the papal territories more secure against Arab incursions, John sent a note of thanks to Basil (August 13, 880).[248]

While the Byzantine naval forces were freeing the seas from Moslem corsairs, a land force under the command of the Protovestarius Procopius and the strategos of Thrace and Macedonia, Leo Apostyppus, had been landed in Italy to act in coordination with the fleet.[249] According to Symeon the

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[247] John VIII, Epistolae, letter CCLXXXVI, col. 899: "Dilectis viris Gregorio spathario, Theophylacto turmacho, atque Diogeni comiti imperialibus. Audientes vos per Dei auxilium, et secundum spiritalis filii nostri imperatoris voluntatem Neapolim venisse ac multitudinem Saracenorum ibi consistentem potenti brachio superasse." This is corroborated by the Arab historian Ibn al-Atir (A.H. 266 = 879-880) in Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 137.

[248] John VIII, Epistolae, letter CCXCVI, col. 909D ("Gratias agimus. Princ quidem quod dromones vestros, qui pro defensione terrae sancti Petri in nostro manerent servitio, nobis misistis."). In a letter to Charles the Fat, John tells the Western ruler of this victory; letter CCCI, col. 914D ("Tamen Deo sint grates et laudes quia Graecorum navigia in mari Israelitarum victoriosissime straverunt phalanges, et eos, prout Dominus voluit, debellati sunt. (Kalendas Novembris, indictione XIV).").

[249] Vita Basilii, 305_{5-8} (ὧν Προκόπιος ὁ τοῦ βασιλέως ἦγεῖτο πρωτοβεστιάριος καὶ Λέων ὁ τῶν Θρᾳκῶν καὶ Μακεδόνων τότε στρατηγός, ὃν Ἀποστύππην ἐκάλουν); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 231_{18-22}.

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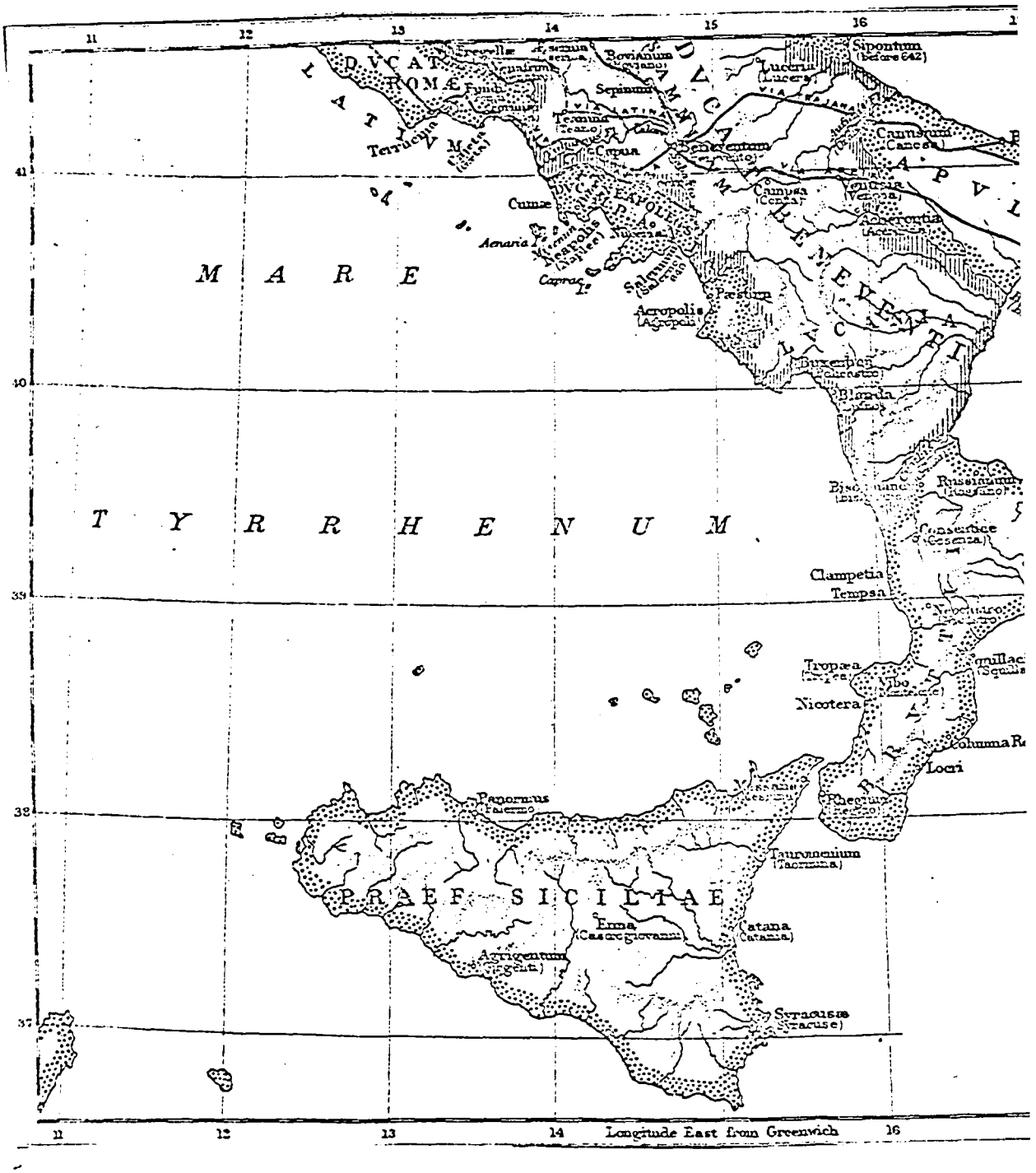

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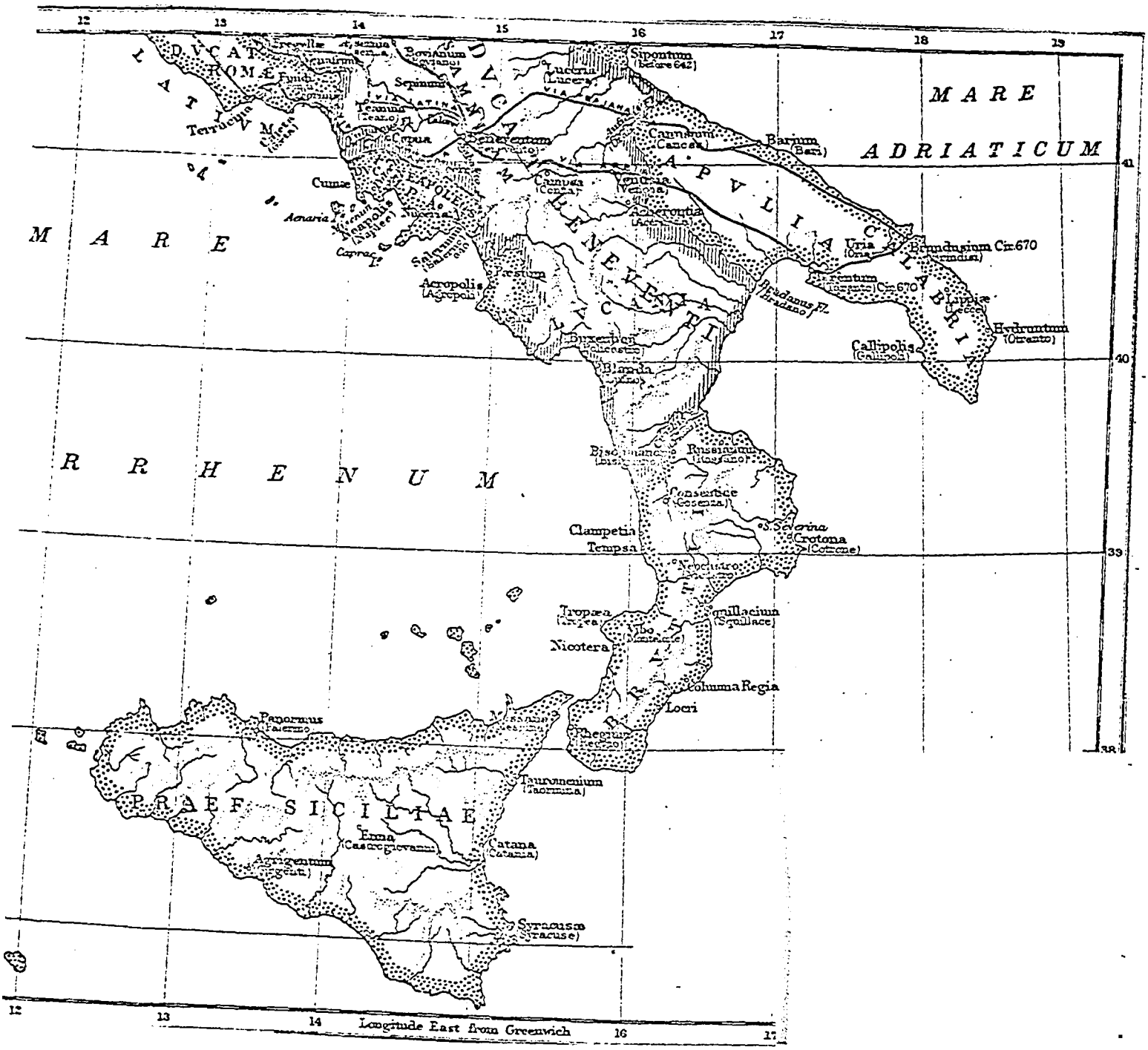

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Logothete's account, the force was of considerable size: the Sicilians under the stratelates Eupraxius, Dyrrachium under Rabdouchus, Cephallania under Mousoulikes, and the Peloponnesus under Oiniates.[250] Unfortunately, little has survived which could enable us to reconstruct the campaign. All that can be said is that the combined offensive of Nasar and Procopius led to the recovery of 150 towns.[251]

After these naval victories Nasar himself returned to Constantinople, bringing with him the spoils of war.[252] The Byzantine army remained behind to complete the task of driving the Moslems from Italy. What hindered the task of the imperial forces, however, was the fact that the strategos Leo Apostyppus was envious of Procopius. Although Procopius was the formal commander-in-chief, Leo was allowed to exercise an equal position of command. This dual leadership was a grave error on the part of the Emperor Basil and almost proved to be disastrous. In a battle fought near Tarentum, the two generals commanded individual wings against two Arab armies. Although Leo was victorious on his wing, he simply allowed the enemy to overwhelm his colleague Procopius, who was killed in a retreat.[253]

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[250] Georgius Continuatus, 845_{5-11} (Ὅντος Εὐπραξίου στρατηλάτου εἰς Σικελίαν, καὶ εἰς Κεφαλληνίαν τοῦ Μουσουλίκη, εἰς δὲ τὸ Δυρράχιον τοῦ Ῥαβδούχου καὶ ἐν τῇ Πελοποννήσῳ τοῦ Ὀνιάτου καὶ τοῦ Ἀποστύππου.)

[251] Vita Basilii, 305_{10-17}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 231_{9-11}. The number 150 is given by Genesius, 116_{1-3} (Ν΄Τε καὶ ρ΄).

[252] Vita Basilii, 305_{13-17}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 231_{11-17}.

[253] Vita Basilii, 305_{18}-306_{8}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 231_{15}-232_{2}. According to both sources, Slavs played a role in the detachment of Procopius (Προκόπιον μετὰ τῶν Σκλαβηνῶν...)

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Following the death of his colleague, Leo rallied the remnants of Procopius' forces to his side. Apparently he had wanted all the glory for himself. He next attacked and captured the last Moslem maritime base in Italy--Tarentum.[254] Although the achievements of Leo were certainly significant, his action came to the attention of Basil, who had him recalled and exiled to Cotyaeium in Asia Minor.[255]

By the end of 880, however, the Byzantine position in southern Italy seemed strongly established. In Calabria, nevertheless, the Arabs still retained a number of important fortresses on the mountainous slopes which were practically impregnable and which were a thorn in the side of the Byzantines. The most significant of these fortresses were St. Severina and Amantea.[256] To terminate the threat to imperial communications posed by these fortresses as well as to secure the position in Calabria, Basil sent, in the year 883, a second expedition under a Cappadocian general, Stephen Maxentius. In this new army were forces from Macedonia and Thrace as well as troops from the eastern themes of Cappadocia

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[254] Vita Basilii, 306_{8-15}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 232_{2-13}.

[255] Vita Basilii, 306_{16-21} (Κοτυαείου); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 232_{13-16}. On the location of Cotyaeium (Kotiaion), see Ramsay, Historical Geography, pp. 94, 144, 155, 168, 199, 201 (note). According to Ramsay, it is in Phrygia, not far from Dorylaion.

[256] On this, see Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 88-89; Gay, op. cit., pp. 114, 132-33.

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and Charsianon.[257] Despite his strength, Stephan could not subdue Amantea or St. Severina. Since the position of the Byzantines could never be secure so long as these bases remained in Arab hands, Basil sent another commander to Italy. This was the capable and energetic Nicephorus Phocas, who had distinguished himself in the eastern war against both the Paulicians and the Arabs.[258] Given supreme command of all the forces in the western theater (he is called μονοστράτηγος), Nicephorus brought with him additional reinforcements from Asia Minor.[259] Since Byzantine intelligence had informed Nicephorus of the terrain in which he would be fighting and the need of good mountain fighters, the Byzantine general brought with him many Paulicians who had joined the empire after 873. (Among these Paulicians was Drakonitzes, the former retainer of Chrysocheir.[260]) Arriving in 885, Nicephorus quickly took the initiative and joined forces with Stephan Maxentius. Then, employing all the forces at his disposal, and above all the Paulicians, he systematically broke the resistance of the Moslems by

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[257] Vita Basilii, 312_{12-21}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 236_{4-8} (ἀποστέλλεται Στέφανος ὁ καὶ Μαξέντιος προσαγορευόμενος...)

[258] On the career of Nicephorus, see Grégoire, "Carriere du N. Phocas," pp. 232-54.

[259] Georgius Continuatus (Vaticanus 153) is reproduced by Grégoire, ibid., p. 250 (καὶ μονοστράτηγος τῶν δυτικῶν θεμάτων προβάλλεται, Θρᾴκης, φημί, καὶ Μακεδονίας καὶ Κεφαληνίας, Λογγιβαρδίας τε καὶ Καλαβρίας.)

[260] Vita Basilii, 318_{22}-313_{1-6}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 236_{8-11}.

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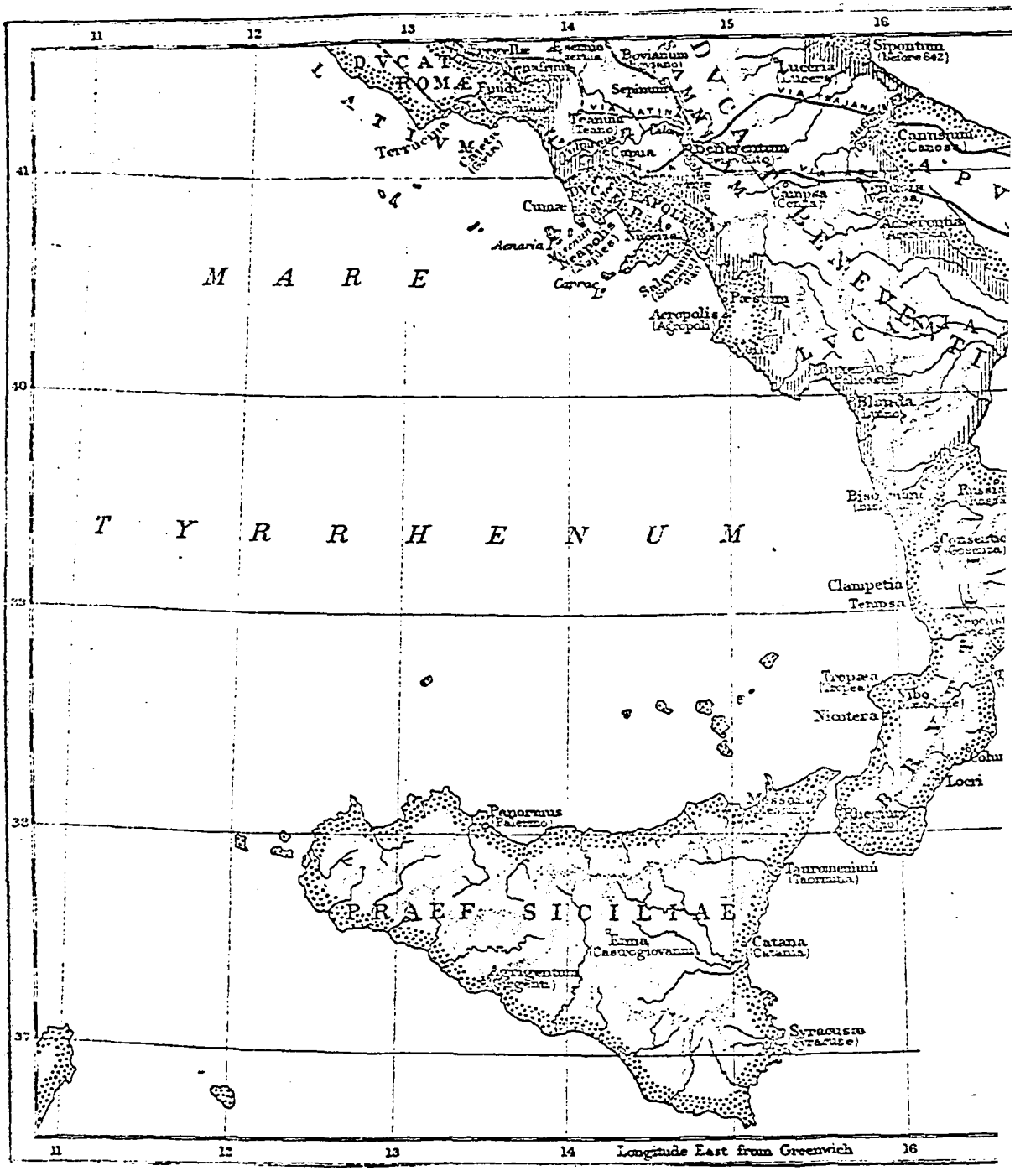

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isolating each of their fortresses individually. Nicephorus gained control of St. Severina, Tropea, and Amantea by the end of the summer of 886.[261] Although the Paulicians, with Nicephorus' generalship, were certainly the decisive factor in the Byzantine success, one must not overlook the importance of Nicephorus' statesmanship. The Arab historian Ibn al-Aṯīr, for instance, records that at both St. Severina and Amantea, Nicephorus gave quarter to the Moslems.[262] The withdrawal of the Moslems from Calabria gave the Byzantines complete and undisputed control of the southern part of the peninsula. Much work still had to be done in the future, especially on the reorganization of this area as a theme,[263] but the energy of Basil's Western policy barred forever the Arabs from Italy and therefore from Greece. Basil's policy in Italy can be considered the salvation of Italy.

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[261] Vita Basilii, 313_{6-20}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 236_{11-18} (Τὴν πόλιν Ἀμαντίαν καὶ Τροπαίας καὶ τὴν ἁγίαν Σεβηρίνην); Erchempert, 256_{24-25} ("Dehinc Amanteum castrum captum est; deinde et dictae Beatae Severinae oppidum apprehensum est.").

[262] Ibn al-Aṯīr, in Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 139-40 (A.H. 272 = 885-886); Ibn ʿIḏārī, ibid., p. 216.

[263] The work of Nicephorus in the reorganization of Italy for the Byzantines perhaps even outshines his military exploits, but it falls outside the scope of this work. On Nicephorus' statesmanship, see, also, Leo the Wise, Tactika, col. 896. On the work of Nicephorus in the reorganization of Italy, see Gay, op. cit., pp. 134-55. The most recent work is by V. Von Falkenhausen, Untersuchungen über die byzantinische Heerschaft in Süditalien vom 9 bis ins 11. Jahrhundert (Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. 21-25.

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CHAPTER VII

BASIL AND THE SICILIAN WARS

As I have shown in the preceding chapter, Basil's intervention in Italy proved to be the salvation of the peninsula from the Moslems. The situation in Sicily, in contrast, turned out quite differently. Realizing the importance of the island as a stepping stone to the Italian peninsula and a gateway to the Adriatic, the Moslems began to focus their attention on it as soon as they developed a naval force. At first, their incursions were little more than raids for booty and plunder;[1] there was no serious attempt to establish a permanent foothold on the island.

With the establishment of Moslem power in North Africa and Spain, the situation changed drastically, for now the Arabs held the western flank of the Mediterranean basin. Nevertheless, in the eighth century the empire was spared the loss of the island because of internal problems which the North African Arabs had with the native Berber element.

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[1] On the subject of Sicily during this period, see the following: Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire, II, 294-302, 341-47, 351, 407-10, 440, 453, 481; Bury, E.R.E., pp. 294-308; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 61-88, 127-37, 143-44, 187-88, 204-08, 219-22, 260-64; Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 20-25, 43-46, 55-56, 59-68, 74-77, 84-87; Amari, Storia.

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Thus Abd ar-Rahman's design for conquest in 752 resulted in failure.[2]

In the years which followed, the danger from the North African Arabs further subsided, and the new Aghlabid ruler, Ibrahim, concluded a ten-year truce with Constantine, the Byzantine governor of Sicily, in 805.[3] Shortly after, Tunis and Tripolis revolted from the Aghlabids and formed their own state under the Idrisids.[4] This separatist movement among the North African Arabs was certainly welcomed by the Byzantines, for it reduced the immediate threat to Sicily. A few years later (813), a treaty of peace for ten years between Gregory, the new governor of Sicily, and Abu'l-Abbas, the son and successor of Ibrahim, further raised hopes in Byzantine Sicily.[5]

In 826, however, an insurrection in Sicily upset this tranquility and led to calamitous consequences for the Byzantines. The leader of this movement was a certain Euphemius, who had earlier distinguished himself as an officer in the navy and had been duly promoted as commander of the fleet with the title of turumarch.[6] According to the sources, an

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[2] Bury, E.R.E., p. 295; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 63-64; Amari, Storia, pp. 299-300.

[3] Ibid., pp. 353-54; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 64.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Amari, Storia, pp. 356-57; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 64. The treaty also provided for the security of the respective merchants.

[6] On the revolt of Euphemius, the following sources exist. The Greek sources are: the contemporary Theognostus which is abridged in Theophanes Continuatus, pp. 81-84;

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incident in his personal life led him to rebel. Apparently he had persuaded a nun called Homoniza to renounce her vows and marry him.[7] Shocked by Euphemius' conduct, her indignant brothers brought a complaint to the Emperor Michael II (820-889). Enraged by this incident, the emperor dispatched a letter to the strategos of Sicily, Photeinus, that he ought to investigate the case and, if the charge was discovered to be true, to cut off Euphemius' nose.[8]

Learning of his danger, Euphemius decided to defy his superior and gained many adherents to his cause, among whom were other turumarchs.[9] With these supporters he occupied Syracuse. Faced with a rebellion in his own province, Photeinus had to attack his former subordinate. In the battle which ensued, Euphemius was triumphant and Photeinus was forced to flee to Catana, where he later was captured

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Pseudo-Symeon, pp. 621-22; Leo Grammaticus, pp. 212-13; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, pp. 97-98; Zonaras, III, 399-400; Vita Theodorae, p. 9. The Latin sources are: Chronicon Salernitanum, p. 498, and John the Deacon, Gesta Episcoporum Neapolitanorum, pp. 429-30. The Arabic sources are: Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, I); Nuwairi (ibid.); Riyāḍ al-Nufūs (ibid.). For literature on the sources, see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 65-66 (nn. 1-3); Bury, E.R.E., pp. 478-80 (appendix 9).

[7]The name of the girl is found in the Chronicon Salernitanum, 498$_{23-25}$("Erat vir praedives quidam in Siciliae finibus, Eufimius nomine; disponsavit puellam, Homonizam nomine gerentum, mirae pulcritudinis.").

[8]Theophanes Continuatus, 82$_6$ (ἀποτεμεῖν κατὰ τὴν τοῦ νόμου ἀκρίβειαν.)

[9]Euphemius had been away on a raid and only learned of the sentence when he returned. Apparently other turumarchs like himself joined his cause. Theophanes Continuatus, 82$_9$.

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and put to death.[10] Driven by the turn of events, Euphemius had little choice but to assume the imperial title and was proclaimed emperor. The assumption of the imperial title had grave repercussions for the usurper, since many of his former supporters began to desert him; perhaps his fellow officers joined him initially because they felt that he was unjustly condemned, but when he assumed the royal title they may have felt that he was going too far. The most significant among them was a certain Patala.[11]

Patala was soon joined by his paternal cousin Michael, who was the governor of Palermo (Panormus).[12] Together these two generals declared for the legitimate emperor, and with a large army defeated Euphemius and regained the city of Syracuse. Too weak to continue the struggle alone, yet knowing that surrender meant death, Euphemius turned for assistance to the African Emir Ziyādat allāh ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al Aglab.[13] Since a treaty existed between the Sicilian government and the Aghlabids, the sheikhs and other notables were summoned by the emir to debate Euphemius' proposals.[14]

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[10] On Photeinus, see Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 356-57. For literature, see Bury, E.R.E., p. 479; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 67-68 (n. 1).

[11] Ibid., p. 69; Bury, E.R.E., p. 297. Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 356) calls him Balata (it probably was a title, perhaps the Palatine dignity). Nuwairī (ibid., pp. 379-80) also calls him Balata.

[12] Ibn al-Aṯīr (ibid., p. 357) mentions Michael.

[13] Riyād al-Nufūs (ibid., p. 340).

[14] Ibid.; Nuwairī (ibid., p. 380).

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According to the account of Riyad al-Nufus, the Arab council was divided. One faction, for instance, opposed the acceptance of the usurper's proposals on the grounds that peace existed between the two states. But another faction, led by the Qadi Asad, a religious fanatic who saw in the proposals a chance for Moslem expansion, urged their acceptance and won his motion.[15]

In 827, a force of 10,000 men, 700 cavalry, and 70 transports, commanded by the Qadi Asad, set sail from Africa and joined forces with Euphemius in the Bay of Soussa. From there they proceeded to disembark at Mazara on the western part of the island, where they were joined by other supporters of the usurper.[16] At Mazara the forces of the Qadi Asad rested for three days, during which an incident of ominous portent occurred.[17] Asad's intention even in this early stage was to take the whole conduct of the campaign into his own hands and to use Euphemius as a puppet.

Learning of the arrival of the Moslem force, Patala set out immediately to deal with the threat. On a coastal

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[15] Ibn al-Aṯīr (ibid., p. 356); Ibn Iḏārī (ibid., p. 374); Nuwairī (ibid., p. 380).

[16] Ibn Iḏārī gives the numbers for the expedition (ibid., p. 374). Nuwairī (ibid., p. 380) mentions the rendezvous at Soussa. On the dating, Nuwairī states that they met on the 13th rabi I 212 (12 June 827). For literature on this subject, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 478-79; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 73-74 (n. 7).

[17] Riyāḍ al-Nufūs (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 342) tells of an incident in which a skirmish broke out among the Qadi's men and the Byzantine force of Euphemius, whereupon to avoid a repetition of a similar occurrence, a twig was placed in the headgear of the Byzantines.

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plain not far from Mazara, the superior forces of the Byzantine general were defeated and Patala was forced to flee.[18] Victorious in their first encounter, the Arabs were encouraged to advance on Syracuse.[19] At a place called Qal'at-al-Kurrāt,[20] a strong fort between Gela and Syracuse, an embassy from Syracuse met the Moslem army and offered to submit and pay tribute on the condition they advance no further.[21] For some time Asad halted, giving the Byzantines valuable time to prepare their defenses and bring into the city valuable property. This may have been the sole purpose of the embassy.

In the meantime Euphemius had come to the realization that he had set free a force which he had not bargained for. What Euphemius had desired was assistance which he could direct and control; instead he found himself gradually being reduced to the status of a puppet by a religious fanatic who was seeking further conquest at his expense. Whether Euphemius accompanied the army of Asad or not is unknown, but he did enter into negotiations with the imperial forces at Syracuse, whom he urged to resist at all costs.[22]

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[18]Riyād al-Nufūs (ibid., pp. 341-42); Nuwairī (ibid., p. 381); Ibn al-Aṯīr (ibid., p. 357). The latter says he (Patala) fled first to Castrogiovanni and then to Calabria, where he died.

[19]According to Bury, E.R.E., p. 299 (n. 3), the Moslems took the south coast route eastward, leaving the coast at Gela and marching to Syracuse via Biscari, Chiaramonte-Gulfi, and Acrae.

[20]This perhaps Acra, which is today Palazzolo-Acreide. Amari, Storia, pp. 399-401 (n. 1).

[21]Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 357); Nuwairī (ibid., p. 381).

[22]Nuwairī (ibid., p. 380); Ibn al.Aṯīr (ibid., p. 357).

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Realizing that further delay was only more advantageous to the Byzantines, Asad now advanced on Syracuse, which he proceeded to besiege by both land and sea. Even though Asad had blockaded both harbors of Syracuse, he was unable to take the city because of his lack of siege machines and manpower. While awaiting further reinforcements from his co-religionists, Asad found his position becoming desperate because of inadequate food supplies. Dissensions arose among the Moslems as a result. A certain Arab leader, caled Ibn Qādim, blatantly urged Asad to give up this mad enterprise and return to Africa.[23] The determined Asad, however, quenched the mutiny by threatening to burn his ships and by flogging the ringleader Ibn Qādim.[24] At the same time reinforcements arrived.[25] With this additional support the Arabs now began to fortify their position by surrounding their camp with a ditch and digging pits to protect their position against a surprise attack from the city. In this fashion the siege of Syracuse continued. Hard pressed by this protracted siege, the Syracusans offered terms to the Moslems but Asad, confident of victory, rejected them.[26]

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[23] Riyād al-Nufūs (ibid., p. 342) preserves a speech of Ibn Qādim, who said to Asad: "Let us return to Africa for the life of one Moslem is more valuable than all [the goods] of the Christians."

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibn Ḥabārī (ibid., p. 374) says that reinforcements came from Spain, Africa, and elsewhere. Nuwairī (ibid., p. 381) says basically the same. Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 80, doubts that they came from Spain, but the Spanish Arabs referred to in these sources came from Crete (but originally from Spain). Compare Bury, E.R.E., p. 300 (n. 2).

[26] Nuwairī (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 381).

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While these developments were taking place, little assistance was sent by Michael II because of the condition of the empire after the revolt of Thomas the Slav.[27] Michael II, nevertheless, did realize the gravity of the situation. Unable to assist personally at first, the emperor called upon the Venetians to aid the Syracusans. The assistance of the new Doge, Justinian, apparently had little effect on the outcome of the siege, however.[28] What saved Syracuse at this time was what had saved it so many times in the past. The plague broke out among the besiegers, and among the casualties was Asad himself.[29] The Moslems immediately elected a new commander, Mohammed ibn Abī'l-Ǧawārī, but the tide of battle had turned. The new commander lacked the enthusiasm of Asad and the plague continued unabated. In addition, new reinforcements arrived from Constantinople and news was received of a second fleet from Venice. The besiegers became desperate, and Mohammed decided to return to Africa while there was still time.[30] When the Arabs attempted to sail out of the harbor they found themselves

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[27] See Chapter VI on the reason why little aid was sent to the West.

[28] Dandalus, p. 170 (827) ("Hic Dux imperialis Consul ab Imperatore requisitus quasdam bellicosas naves contra Saracenos, qui Siciliam invaserant, destinavit.").

[29] On the plague, see Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 258 (22 March 828-10 March 829). On the chronology of the death of Asad, see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 81 (n. 4).

[30] Nuwairī (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 382); Ibn al-Aṯīr (ibid., p. 358).

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trapped like the Athenians had some 1,200 years earlier. Mohammed ordered his men to disembark and burn their fleet. Then they began to retreat across land toward Mineo.[31]

In the retreat Euphemius rejoined the Arabs and served as their guide. Perhaps he hoped again to employ the Arabs to hiw own ends now that Asad was dead.[32] At Mineo, which was easily captured, the Moslems recuperated from the effects of the plague. After resting for some time, they resumed the offensive but with divided forces.

One detachment captured Girgente on the southern coast of the island. The other, accompanied by Euphemius, marched against Castrogiovanni in the center.[33] Here the inhabitants pretended to negotiate with Euphemius, promising even to recognize him as emperor and join his cause. These overtures, however, were a subterfuge and when Euphemius came to meet a legation from town, he fell into a trap and was murdered.[34]

The death of Euphemius simplified the struggle in Sicily to one in which there was now a single issue--the

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[31] Ibid. On the location of the site, see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 82-83 (n. 4).

[32] Ibid., p. 82; Nuwairī (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 382) tells about Euphemius accompanying the retreating army.

[33] Ibn al-Aṯīr (ibid., p. 358); Nuwairī (ibid., p. 382).

[34] According to the Arab sources he was stabbed from behind while some paid him homage. Ibid.; Ibn al-Aṯīr (ibid., p. 358). According to the account of Theophanes Continuatus, p. 83, and Scylitzes-Cedrenus, pp. 78-79, he was killed by two brothers at Syracuse.

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contest between the Moslems and the Christians for the island. The struggle in the following years was slow and tedious. Initially the outcome of the conflict was uncertain. The relief force sent to Syracuse under the Patrician Theodotus took the initiative and attacked the enemy at Castrogiovanni. Here the Byzantine general suffered an initial reverse and was forced to take refuge in the fortress.[35] He soon resumed the offensive and inflicted a thorough defeat upon the Arab forces. Some of the enemy who had escaped fled to Mineo where they were reduced by Theodotus' blockade to eating the flesh of horses and dogs.[36] At the same time the Moslem garrison at Girgenti withdrew to Mazara.[37]

As a result of Theodotus' successes in the year 829, only Mazara and Mineo remained in Arab hands. Had a strong force been sent from the capital at this time, the Arab danger might perhaps have been ended in its infancy.

This, however, was not done, and Theodotus was left to complete his task alone. Unfortunately for the empire, two Moslem fleets were sent to retrieve the situation in 830. Besides the one sent by the Aghlabid ruler, there was

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[35]Ninety patricians were taken prisoner by the Arabs according to Nuwairi (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 382).

[36]Ibn al-Aṯīr (ibid., pp. 358-59); Nuwairi, ibid., p. 382.

[37]Ibid. See, also, Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 86-88; Amari, Storia, pp. 414-17.

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also a Spanish squadron under Asbag ibn Wakīl.[38] The Arab forces besieged at Mineo negotiated with the force which arrived first and agreed to recognize Asbag as commander-in-chief of the army in return for his assistance. The Arab condottiere then advanced to the relief of Mineo and inflicted a defeat upon the Byzantines, killing their able general Theodotus.[39]

Asbag's career was cut short not long thereafter. While he was besieging a stronghold called G-l-Wāliyah, which is perhaps Calloniana, he was carried off by a pestilence, and his forces returned to Spain.[40]

Meanwhile the main North African force, which had departed at the same time as Asbag, lay siege to the city of Palermo. The city held out for a year, but in September of 831 its commander betrayed it to the Arabs.[41]

The fall of Palermo was a great blow to the Byzantine empire. It marked, as Bury noted, the first step in the

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[38]Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 127; Amari, Storia, pp. 419-20. The African force alone consisted of 300 vessels and 20,000-30,000 troops.

[39]The death of Theodotus is mentioned by the Cambridge Chronicle (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 345) (ἔτους ,ϛτλθ' (830-831) παρελήθη τὸ Μήναιον καὶ ἐσφάγη ὁ πατρίκιος Θεόδοτος ἰνδ. θ'.)

[40]Amari, Storia, pp. 421-22; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 128-29. The source for the siege of Calloniana is Ibn Idārī (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 374-75). (It also states that he arrived with 300 ships.)

[41]According to Nuwairī (ibid., p. 383), the siege of Palermo began on gumada II 215 (26 July 829-25 April 830). It (the city) fell on regeb 216 (14 April-12 September 831), according to Ibn al-Atīr (ibid., p. 359). The Cambridge Chronicle (ibid., p. 345) gives the exact date (ἔτους ,ϛτμ' ἐπιάσθη πάνορμος ἰνδ. ι'.)

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conquest of the island.[42] It gave the Arabs an important naval base. Henceforth, Palermo became the nucleus of Arab power in Sicily and a base for all of their offensives.[43]

To facilitate the Arab offensive, the Aghlabid ruler of Africa appointed a separate governor for Sicily. The first was Abū Fihr Mohammed ibn ʿAbdallah, who arrived on the island in 822-823 (A.H. 217).[44] Initially Abū Fihr concentrated on consolidating the Arab position in the western part of the island, and no important town or fortress was taken by the Arabs.[45] Some victories were scored, and Abū Fihr almost captured the great fortress of Castrogiovanni in 834-835 (A.H. 219).[46] His successors, al-Fadl-ibn Ya'qūb (835)[47] and Abu'l Aglab Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbdallah ibn al-Aglab, showed similar energy. They won several victories and captured some fortresses.[48] But the Byzantines held their own, and at times even defeated the Arabs. In 837 the imperial forces captured an important Arab leader, ʿAbd al Salām ibn

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[42]Bury, E.R.E., p. 305. [43]Amari, Storia, pp. 428-29.

[44]He was made governor in 216 A.H. (18 February 831-6 February 832) according to Ibn ʿIdārī (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 375).

[45]The Cambridge Chronicle (ibid., p. 345) records the capture of Bān-rm.

[46]On the siege of Castrogiovanni, see Ibn al-Aṭīr (ibid., pp. 359-60).

[47]Apparently al-Fadl was only a temporary replacement after the murder of Abū Fihr.

[48]Seemingly the Arabs concentrated on the region of Castrogiovanni and Mt. Etna. See Ibn al-Aṭīr (ibid., pp. 360-66). According to Ibn ʿIdārī (ibid., p. 375), he captured the fortress of M-d-nār (probably Tyndaris) at this time. On Tyndaris, see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 134 (n. 3).

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'Abd al Wahkāb.[49] The following year saw further Byzantine successes, among which was the rescue of the fortress of Kephaloedion (Cefalu).[50] Perhaps one of the reasons why the tide turned in favor of the empire was the arrival of the energetic caesar, Alexius Musele, the son-in-law of the Emperor Theophilus (829-842).[51] Local intrigues against the caesar, however, soon led to his recall and exile.[52]

The removal of Alexius had immediate and disastrous consequences. For the Arabs on his departure proceeded to reduce the fortresses of H.r.ha, Qal'at al-Ballūt (Cattabellotta), Iblātanū (Platani), Qulurlūn (Corleone), M-r-ā (Calatamauro or Marineo), and others.[53] A few years later (A.H. 228 = 10 October 842-29 September 843) the Arab general al-Fadl ibn Ğa'far al-Hamdānī captured the important city of Messina with aid from Naples.[54] This gave the Moslems a foothold in the northeast and control over the straits.

With the capture of Messina the Arabs had two of the most important points on the island in their possession. In

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[49] Ibid., p. 134.

[50] Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 362) (A.H. 223 = 3 December 837-22 November 838).

[51] On the career of Alexius Musele, see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 135-37.

[52] Theophanes Continuatus, pp. 107-09; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, pp. 107-09, 118-19; Pseudo-Symeon, pp. 631-32; Georgius Continuatus, pp. 794-96.

[53] Nuwairī (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 383) (A.H. 225 = 12 November 839-30 October 840).

[54] Ibn al-Aṯīr (ibid., p. 363). The fall of Messina occurred in December.

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addition they were virtually masters of the western part of Sicily. In 845 they turned their attention to the southeast, capturing Modica.[55] The pincer-like drives of the Arabs again stirred the imperial government to take steps to mitigate this situation, but a relief army sent by the Empress-Regent Theodora accomplished little.[56] The Byzantines suffered the further loss of the important city of Leontini (A.H. 232 = 28 April 846-16 April 847), also taken by al-Fadl.[57] In 848 the Byzantines lost the city of Ragusa in the southeast.[58]

The remains of the Byzantine positions in Sicily were now in a pincer-like grip. Nevertheless, the Arab offensive in the next ten years slowed to a tortoise-like pace.[59] (Perhaps the fact that the Arabs were also engaged in conquering southern Italy was responsible.)

In 857-858 a new offensive began with the capture of the fortress of Kephaloedion (Cefalu) by the Arabs.[60] A

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[55]Modica's capture is found in the Cambridge Chronicle (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 345) (Ἔτους ,ϛτυϑ' ἐπιάσθησαν τὰ καστέλλια τῆς Τουρακιναίς καὶ ὁ ἅγιος Ἀναυιάς τῆς Μούτικας ἰνδ. η'.)

[56]Ibn al-Atīr (ibid., p. 363). He dates it 843-844, but see Bury, E.R.E., p. 806 (n. 4).

[57]Ibn al-Atīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 363-64).

[58]Cambridge Chronicle (ibid., p. 345) (Ἔτους ,ϛτυϛ' παρελήφθησαν οἱ Ῥωγοὶ καὶ ἐγένετο λιμὸς ἰσχυρὸς ἰνδ. ια'.)

[59]In the period 848-857 the Arabs made pillaging raids into the interior about Castrogiovanni (849-850, 854-855, 855-856) as well as ravages on the region of Catana, Syracuse, and Noto (852-853). On this period, see Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 219-22; Amari, Storia, pp. 462-73.

[60]Ibn al-Atīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 366). See, also, Amari, Storia, pp. 61-64; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 219.

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major stumbling block to Arab success was the almost impregnable fortress of Castrogiovanni. As long as the Byzantines controlled it, the empire possessed a base from which it could counterattack. To eliminate this possibility, the Arab governor of Sicily, al-Abbas ibn al-Fadl ibn Ya'qūb, concentrated all his attention on this target. Early expeditions into the region had already reduced the fortress' neighbors, so Castrogiovanni stood alone. Nevertheless, the fortress valiantly defended its position until it was betrayed on January 24, 859.[61]

The danger to Castrogiovanni was, of course, known to the imperial government. Michael III (855-867) acted with speed to rescue this mighty fortress and sent a fleet of 300 vessels under Constantine Kondomytes.[62] When Constantine arrived later in the year, the city had already fallen.[63] Nevertheless, he promptly took the initiative and assumed the offensive[64] to retrieve the situation. Luck, however, was on the side of the Moslems. According to Ibn al-Aṯīr, Constantine suffered the loss of 100 chelandia in a naval engagement.[65] On land, too, he was defeated by al-Abbas,

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[61] On the fall of Castrogiovanni, see Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 366-67); Cambridge Chronicle (ibid., p. 346) (Ἔτους ,ϛτξϛ' παρεδόθη τὸ Ἔννς ἰνδ. ϛ'). Nuwairi (ibid., pp. 384-85) gives the exact date of the capture--24 January 859.

[62] Theophanes Continuatus, p. 175.

[63] The size of his fleet is given by Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, I, 367).

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid. Ibn al-Aṯīr probably exaggerates the losses of the Byzantines, for he says that the Arabs lost only three men.

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near Cefalu.[66] The only effect which the arrival of this Byzantine force had was to encourage several towns to rebel against their Arab masters. Among these were Sutera, Avola, Platano, Caltabellotta, Caltavuturo, and Qal'at-Abd-al-Mu'min.[67] These, however, were quickly recovered by al-Abbas once he had defeated the imperial army in the field.[68]

In the last years of Michael III's life no further attempts were made to rescue the disintegrating position in Sicily, and between the years 862 and 867 further losses were incurred. In 862, the following fortresses were taken: Gebel-abi-Melik, Qal'at-al-Armanin, and Qal'at-al-Musari'a.[69] And two years later the fall of the fortresses of Noto and Sikli further strengthened the Arab position in the southeast.[70]

When Basil became emperor in 867, he inherited in Sicily a situation which can best be described as disastrous. By this time only the eastern coast of the island was still effectively in imperial hands, and even there their position was growing worse each day.[71] Basil, however, hoped to correct this situation. Sicily was as much a part of Basil's strategy as Italy and Dalmatia were. The emperor's

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[66] Ibid. [67] Ibid.; see year 246 A.H.

[68] Ibid. [69] Ibid., p. 368.

[70] Ibid., A.H. 250 (for Noto, then Sicily [Sikli]). See, also, Cambridge Chronicle (ibid., p. 346).

[71] On the conditions in Sicily at the accession of Basil, see Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 20.

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intervention was more difficult here, not only because his interests were divided between Sicily and the mainland, but also because of the position of the imperial forces on the island.[72] By 867 the Arabs had the Byzantines in a virtual pincer.[73] This placed any relief force in a precarious position. One can say that a newly arriving army was stepping into the proverbial lion's den. Furthermore, any reinforcements would also be hampered by the fact that the Arabs controlled the mainland in both Italy and North Africa, giving them mastery of the seas. Any successful attempt to rescue the situation in Sicily would have to eliminate one of these Arab positions. Since the empire retained a footing on the more accessible mainland, success in Sicily to a large degree rested on events in Italy.

At first Basil repeated the strategy of his predecessors. They had held an illusionary belief that the tide of the Moslem advance could be turned simply by sending fresh troops and ships to the island. Perhaps they hoped that these token reinforcements would in some miraculous way raise the morale of the inhabitants, as in the days of the Syracusan-Carthaginian conflict more than a millenium ago, and carry them on to victory. As time was to show, this was not the solution, but this was the course which Basil followed in the early years of his reign.

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[72] See Chapter VI on Basil's Italian objectives.

[73] See map.

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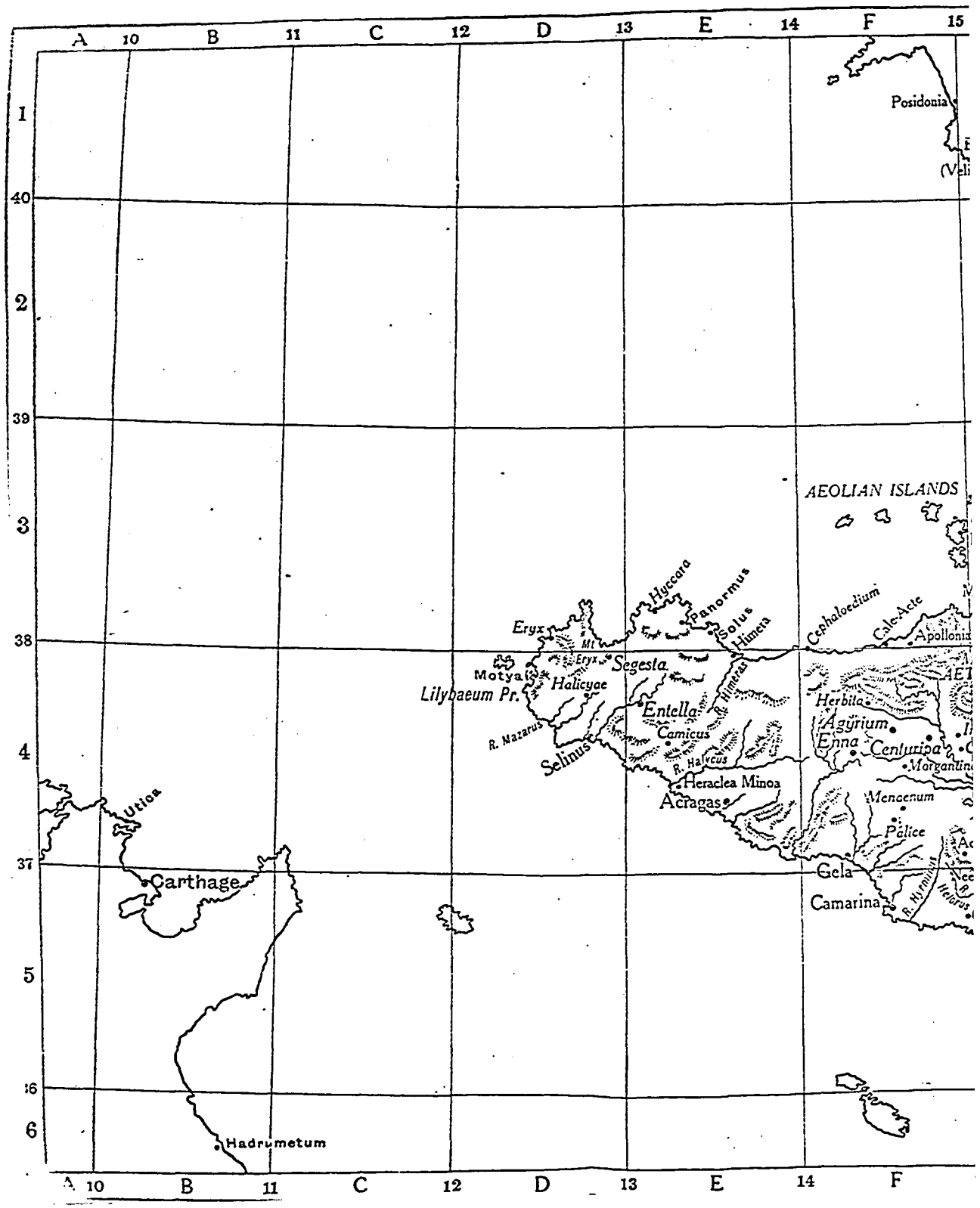

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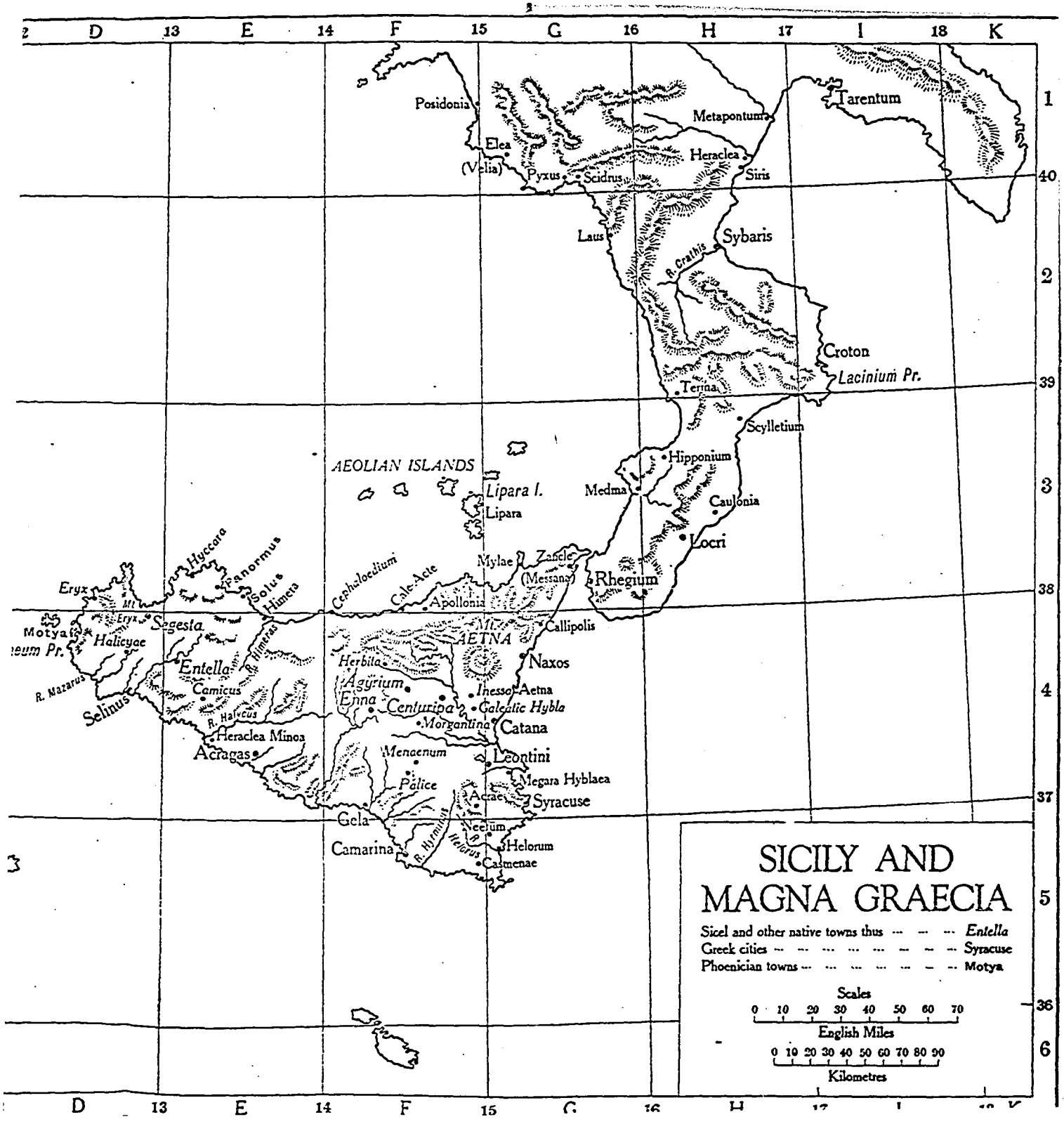

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In 868, following Basil's successful expedition on the Adriatic coast, a large relief army was sent to Sicily under the command of a patrician. Arriving in March (rabi 20 = 19 March 868), the imperial force came at an opportune moment, for the Arab governor of Sicily, Ḥafāǧa ibn Sufian was preparing his annual raid against Syracuse.[74] Apparently the Arab strategy was to wear down the morale of the Byzantines by relentless raids on their remaining strongholds.[75] While Ḥafāǧa commanded the land forces in this expedition, his son Mohammed directed the attack by sea.[76] In the battle which followed, not far from the city, the imperial troops suffered a total defeat. Thousands were lost, and according to Ibn ʿIḏārī the Arabs obtained a great deal of booty, including arms and horses.[77] Ḥafāǧa then followed up his victory with an offensive drive against Syracuse itself, destroying the crops and laying waste the adjacent

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[74]Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 131); al-Bayan, in Amari, Bibliotheca arabo-sicula, Versione italiana (hereafter cited as Amari, Versione I or II), II, 14; Ibn Ḫaldūn (Amari, Versione, II, 184); Ibn ʿIḏārī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 214).

[75]The same strategy was used against Castrogiovanni earlier, as I have noted above.

[76]Ibn al-Aṯīr (ibid., p. 131). According to Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 20, Mohammed possessed harraqat (singular harraqa, fireboats). According to Fahmy, op. cit., pp. 134-36, they were warships filled with combustibles, but when disarmed were used for transport. Fahmy adds that they were constructed by the Caliph al-Amin in the form of horses, elephants, eagles, dolphins, and snakes.

[77]Ibn ʿIḏārī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 214); al-Bayan (Amari, Versione, II, 14).

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countryside.[78] By June of that year he returned to Palermo and sent his son Mohammed on a punitive raid against the city of Gaeta (1 ragab = 26 June 868).[79]

Returning from his raid on Gaeta in the autumn of 868 (sawal 254 = 23 September-21 October 868), Ḥafāǧa obtained some valuable information from an informant on how to take the important fortress of Taormina.[80] Realizing that the capture of this fortress would split the remaining imperial forces into two parts, Ḥafāǧa sent his son Mohammed (in January, 869) to Taormina.[81] When Mohammed arrived at the city, he divided his forces: a vanguard, with the informant leading the way, was sent ahead, while Mohammed remained with the main part of his force in the rear to approach the city at an appointed hour. From Ibn al-Aṯīr's account, it is obvious that the informant and the vanguard were sent ahead to gain entry into the city and then await the main army. Initially, the plan worked quite well. The informant and the vanguard captured some of the gates and parts of the wall. They even began to pillage the area. Mohammed, however, for some reason unknown to us, delayed his arrival. Perhaps there was some confusion in the timing, or they may

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[78] On the pillaging of Syracuse and its environs, see Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 131); Ibn Ḫaldūn (Amari, Versione, II, 1-84).

[79] According to all the above sources he returned by this date to Palermo.

[80] Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 131).

[81] Ibid., pp. 131-32, gives the date as safar 255 (= 19 January-16 February 869); Ibn Ḫaldūn (Amari, Versione, II, 184).

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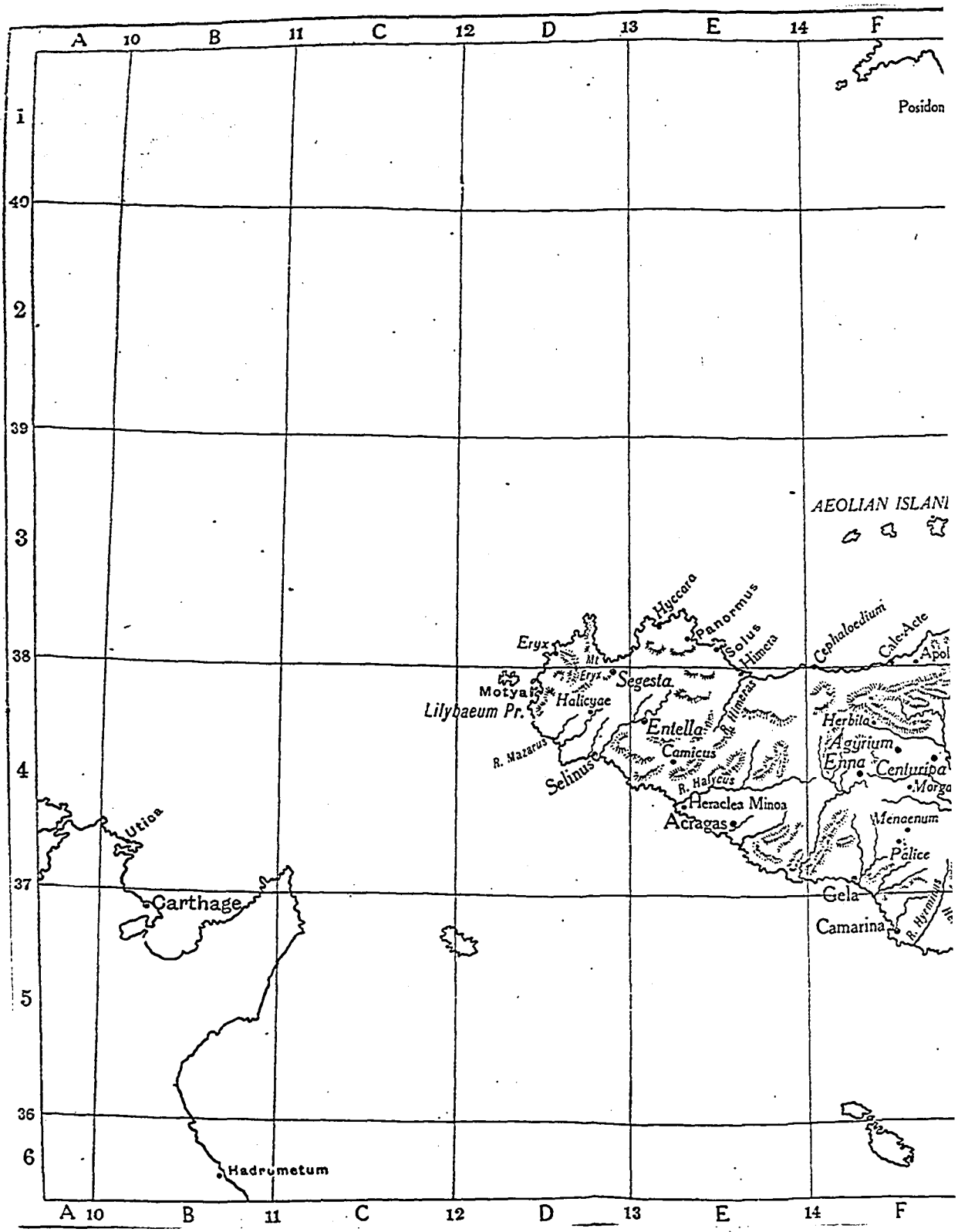

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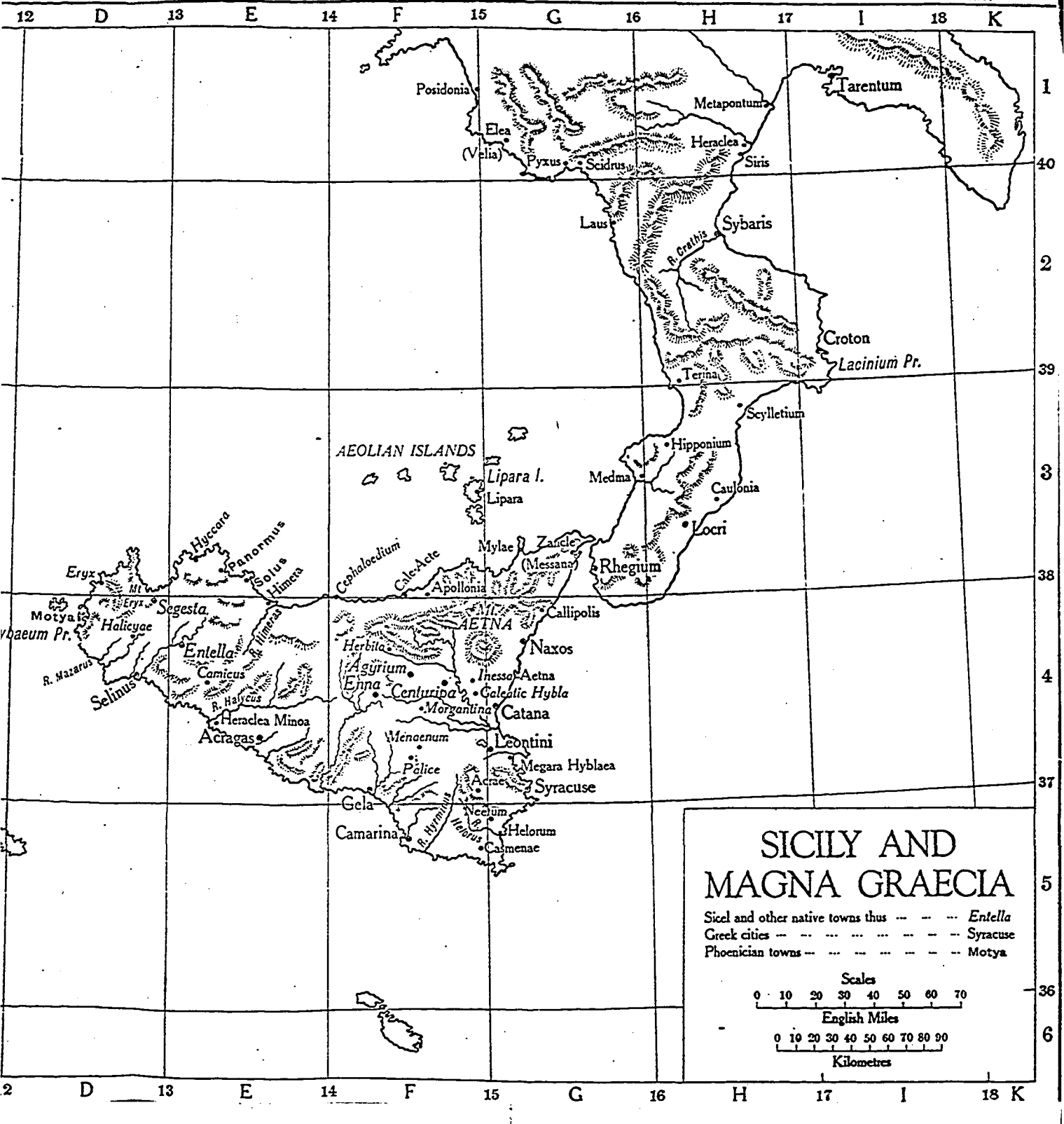

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have been a little too cautious. Be that as it may, panic erupted among the vanguard, who perhaps realized their weakness, and they fled in disorder. Losing the chance which he had in his grasp, but realizing that a similar opportunity would hardly arise again, Mohammed returned to Palermo.[82]

This setback did not cause Ḥafāǧa to despair. On the contrary, in the month of rabi I (= 17 February-18 March 869),[83] he prepared another campaign against the Byzantine forces. He himself marched against a fortress called M.r.sa, which is perhaps Tiracia (the modern Randezzo).[84] Simultaneously, his son marched against the city of Syracuse. In an encounter with the Byzantine forces before the city, Mohammed suffered a defeat, the Arabs being compelled to withdraw from the field, leaving their dead behind. In retreating, Mohammed met his father's forces, who were apparently marching to Syracuse. Desiring to restore the morale of his troops, Hafaga decided to renew the attack on the city, but was met with stout resistance and had to content himself with ravaging the countryside as in his previous expedition.[85] Shortly after his return to Palermo, Ḥafāǧa was assassinated by a Berber in his army called Halfun ibn abi Ziad al Huwari.[86]

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[82]The description of this is preserved for us by Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 131-32). See, also, Amari, Storia, p. 487.

[83]Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 132).

[84]See Amari, Storia, p. 488, especially n. 1.

[85]Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 132); al-Bayan (Amari, Versione, II, 14); Ibn Iḏārī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 214).

[86]Ibid. The name of the Berber is preserved in Nuwairī (Amari, Versione, II, 123). He used a lance to kill the governor and then escaped to the Byzantines.

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Since the assassin escaped to the Byzantines, it seems possible that the imperial government was behind the assassination. Perhaps the Byzantines believed that once Hafaga was dead his successor might prove to be less energetic and able.[87]

Since Mohammed, who had demonstrated a relentless energy, succeeded his father, it is obvious that the Byzantines had made a mistake.[88] This was not apparent at first. Once Mohammed became the new ruler of Sicily, he delegated the customary military enterprises to his subordinates while he himself remained at Palermo. Nevertheless, Mohammed showed remarkable acumen in the choice of his commanders. His Uncle ʿAbdallah ibn Sufiān, for instance, was given charge of the land war, which he carried on professionally in the following year by maintaining Arab pressure on Syracuse with a customary raid into the environs of the city.[89] More significant was Mohammed's success at sea. It was Mohammed who took the initiative in the capture of the strategic island of Malta, giving the Arabs complete control of all the islands surrounding Sicily. (Actually, the process of isolating Sicily in this fashion began with the capture of Pantelleria in 700, giving them control of the straits between Africa and

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[87]This was suggested also by Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 22; Amari, Storia, pp. 488-89.

[88]Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 132) records the confirmation of Mohammed as the governor of Sicily by the North African ruler Mohammed ibn Ahmad. This is also repeated by Ibn ʿIdārī (ibid., p. 215).

[89]Ibn al-Aṯīr (ibid., p. 132).

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Sicily.[90] Then followed the capture of Agates Island.[91] In 836, during the reign of Theophilus, Lipari fell.[92] As a result of these successes only Malta remained under imperial control.) To complete the task of isolating Sicily, the African emir sent an expedition under Ahmad ibn Umar ibn Ubayd Allah ibn al-Aglab to occupy the island.[93] The imperial forces, however, realized the strategic importance of Malta and hastened to rescue it, winning some initial victories. This effort was nipped in the bud by the energetic Mohammed, who reinforced the Arab forces and gained control of the island on August 29, 870.[94] Only Rhegium on the toe of the mainland could now send assistance to Sicily, but even here the Arabs must have maintained a close vigilance.

In the following year (May 27, 871), Mohammed was assassinated by some of his servants.[95] The culprits

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[90]Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, II, 63. (It had to be regained again by the Arabs in 835.)

[91]Ibid.

[92]Ibid. This island was of great importance to the Christians because it preserved the relics of Saint Bartholomew. When it was threatened, the ruler of Beneventum asked the city of Amalfi to save these objects. As a result it was accomplished. This story is told by the Vita Ignatii, p. 217.

[93]Amari, Storia, p. 490.

[94]The expedition is found in Ibn al-Atīr (Amari, Versione, I, 387). The date is recorded by the Cambridge Chronicle (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 99) ("ἔτους ,ϛτοη΄: παρεδόθη ἡ μεσέτη μηνὶ αὐγούστῳ κθ΄ ἰνδ... γ΄.). See, also, Amari, Versione, I, 279, and Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 99. On the island of Malta see, also, Amari, Storia, p. 490 (n. 1).

[95]Ibn al-Atīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 132-33); al-Bayan (Amari, Versione, II, 15) calls the murderers eunuchs. (He also gives the date of the crime.)

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concealed their crime and fled, but eventually they were apprehended and executed. For the Byzantines, the death of Mohammed was certainly a blessing because it removed a relentless adversary. Internal problems followed, resulting in no less than six rulers in Sicily between the years 871-873.[96] The only offensive that the Moslems were able to launch occurred in the year 873 (259 A.H. = 7 November 872-26 October 873) against Syracuse.[97] The inhabitants, however, succeeded in making a truce with the enemy by releasing 360 Moslem prisoners.

During the years 873-877 the Arabs fared no better, for internal dissensions continued on the island and the Aghlabid rulers of North Africa showed little interest in Sicily.[98]

The election in Africa of Ibrahim ibn Ahmad ibn al-Aglab as the new ruler altered this situation. He immediately decided to put an end to Byzantine control of Syracuse. His plan called for a combined attack by land and sea. The North Africans were to provide the sea power which was to cooperate with the Sicilian land forces.[99] On land the military

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[96] Amari, Storia, pp. 530-34.

[97] Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 133); al-Bayan (Amari, Versione, II, 15); Ibn ʿIḏārī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 215).

[98] Amari, Storia, pp. 534-35; Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 45-46.

[99] The Arab sources are silent on the preparations of the African fleet. They merely state that the city was invested by both land and sea. Nevertheless, the Greek sources supplement this information. See Vita Basilii, 309$_{11-18}$; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, p. 234 (Οἱ δὲ ἐν Συρακούσαις βάρβαροι ... ἑκατέρωθεν κατὰ εἰκελίας ἐθάρρησαν, καὶ πρὸς

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operations were to be directed by the new governor of the island, Ǧafar ibn Mohammed.[100]

Early in the year 877, Ǧafar began with a preliminary raid into the regions of Syracuse, Catana, Taormina, Rametta, and elsewhere in order to destroy the crops for the year.[101] Gafar began to occupy some of the suburbs of the city of Syracuse;[102] then followed the combined attack. Anticipating an attack, the Byzantines were well supplied. The Arabs, too, were well prepared. Whereas in the past they had lacked sufficient siege equipment, this time they had an abundant and varied array.[103] According to Ibn al-Aṯīr, a few

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Τὴν ταύτης ἐλθόντες μητρόπολιν, τὰς Συρακούσας φημὶ, ταύτην ἐπολιόρκουν ...)

[100]Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 133).

[101]Ibid., p. 136; 309$_{18-19}$ (καὶ περὶ αὐτὴν ἐλῄζοντο καὶ κατεδῄουν τὴν χώραν καὶ τὰ προάστεια); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, p. 234.

[102]The sources for the attack are as follows: Theodosius the Monk (a contemporary) in E. Muratori, Rerum Italicarum Scriptorum, I, Part II, 257-65; Vita Basilii, pp. 309-12; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, pp. 234-36; Genesius, pp. 116-18; Zonaras, III, 482; Pertusi, De thematibus, p. 95; Vita Ignatii, p. 573; Nicolas Mysticus, Epistolae, ed. Migne, P.G. 111, p. 277; Georgius Continuatus, ed. E. Muralt, p. 759; Ibn al-Aṯir (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 136-37); Ibn Iḏārī (ibid., p. 215); al-Bayan (Amari, Versione, II, 15-16); Nuwairi (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 232); al-ʿAinī (ibid., p. 269); Cambridge Chronicle, ed. Cozza-Luzi, p. 33. For literature on the subject, see C. Famin, Historie des invasions des Sarrazins en Italie (Paris, 1843), I, 346-71; Amari, Storia, pp. 534-51; Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 59-62.

[103]These are mentioned by Theodosius the Monk, pp. 259-60. He was an eyewitness to the siege and was later taken into captivity and imprisoned at Palermo. The original Greek account of this work can be found in the Paris edition of Leo the Deacon, Historia (Paris, 1819), pp. 179-82. It is, however, incomplete. More complete but inaccurate is the Latin translation of Muratori. There is also a French translation of this by Famin, op. cit., pp. 341-71.

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Byzantine ships were sent to the aid of the Syracusans in the initial phase of the siege, but they were apparently insufficient and were destroyed with ease.[104]

As the siege dragged on, scarcity appeared, for the city was completely cut off. Under such conditions prices rose at an alarming rate. The account of an eyewitness, the monk Theodosius, gives some examples: A modius of wheat cost 100 nomismata; a modius of flour cost 200 nomismata; two ounces of bread, one nomisma; a yoked animal, 300 nomismata; the skull of an ass or a horse, fifteen to twenty nomismata.[105] Soon the city had no poultry, olive oil, salted fish, cheese, legumes, or fish.[106] According to Theodosius' narrative, the inhabitants were reduced to eating grass, the hides of animals, crushed bones in water, and eventually the dead.[107] Their plight further deteriorated when the famous Arethusian spring turned salty after an earthquake.[108]

Under these appalling conditions an epidemic arose, killing thousands of people. As a result, the tide of battle

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[104]Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 136).

[105]Theodosius the Monk, p. 259B,C:
"Iam enim tritici modius centum et quinquaginta nummis aureis . . . pistores vero pluris vendebant, quippe ducentis aureis . . . duarum unciarum panis nummo aureo. . . . Adde quod trecentis aureis eo amplius jumentum. . . . Et quinque supra decem, quandoque etiam viginti constabat equinum caput."

[106]Ibid., p. 259C ("Iam vero domesticarum avium defecerat genus, oleum autem et salsamentorum. . . . Casei, leguminum, et piscium.").

[107]Ibid., p. 259A ("Posteaquam aegre diuturnam famem herbarum victu toleravimus.").

[108]Ibid.

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began to turn in favor of the besiegers, who gained more ground each day. According to the vivid account of Theodosius the Monk, the fortifications which protected the approaches to the harbor of Syracuse were destroyed. (Perhaps these were the fortifications situated on the shores opposite Ortygia.[109]) Five days later the seaside towers in the great harbor collapsed under the constant battering of the Arab catapults. Then followed the collapse of the wall adjacent to the towers.[110] Into this breach in the wall the Arabs concentrated their attack. Despite this catastrophe the battle-weary Byzantines defended the city for twenty more days and nights under an able patrician.[111] But numbers told in the end. If one can accept Theodosius' account, the enemy had a hundred to one advantage.[112]

Finally on the morning of May 21, 878, after almost nine months, the end came. According to Theodosius, all seemed calm that day. The patrician and the major part of

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[109] Amari, Storia, pp. 536-37.

[110] Theodosius the Monk, p. 260C: "Turris quae ad majorem portum in dextro Urbis angulo erat extructa, catapultarum VI, quibus hostes saxa praegrandia jaculabantur, concussa primum, mox ex parte cecidit: ab huius Turris excidio quinque post diebus murus propugnaculi, qui fuerat antea Turri conjunctus eodem catapultarum impetus diruptus est."

[111] Ibid. ("Sub auspiciis Beatissimi Ducis Patritii, summaeque huius contentioni obsecundare conabantur supraquam oratione explicari possit, dies viginti, totidemque noctes.").

[112] Ibid., p. 260B ("Hostes enim totis copiis Urbem obsidebant, erantque numero superiores adeo, ut centum ex illis (quod vix assequitur fidem) cum uno e nostris manus conserevent.").

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his army were taking a well-deserved rest, leaving the breach to be guarded by a small detachment commanded by John Patrinus.[113] Suddenly the storm broke. Under the cover of a barrage of rocks fired by their catapults, the Arabs attacked and carried the breach, killing the Byzantine commander and wiping out his detachment. When the patrician heard the clamor of the battle, he rushed to the aid of his men, but it was too late;[114] the Arabs were already in the city. A small detachment of Byzantines, nevertheless, made a valiant attempt to block the way of the Arabs to the Church of the Savior, but were mercilessly cut down. Then the Arabs burst into the church itself and killed everyone in sight--young and old, men and women, priests, monks, and slaves.[115] The patrician, who was still alive, made a last desperate attempt at resistance in a tower, with seventy men. But they were taken prisoner on the next day.[116] Eight days after the taking of the city, the die-hard prisoners were brought before the Arab commander and sentenced to death. First to be executed was the patrician. The dignity with which he

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[113] Ibid., p. 261B (Beatus Joannes Patrinus).

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid., p. 261B,C:
"Ac primum iis, qui ad Servatoris aedis. . . . Tum vero omnis aetas eodem temporis momento in acie gladii corruit, Princeps, et omnes Judices Terrae (quod in Psalmis canere solemus) juvenes, et virgines, senes cum junioribus, Monasticam professi, tum matrimonis copulati, Sacerdotes, et Populus, servus et liber."

[116] Ibid., p. 261D ("Patritius . . . cum septuagenta viris vivus capitur.").

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died impressed even the Arab commander, Busa.[117] Then the other seventy men were led out of the city and killed. One among them, a certain Nicetas of Tarsus, who reviled the prophet Mohammed, was hideously dispatched.[118]

Theodosius the Monk was himself in a church with the Bishop of Syracuse (perhaps Sophronius) at the time when the Arabs entered the city.[119] When a report reached the church that the Arabs had entered the city, Theodosius, the bishop, and two other clergymen threw off their clerical garb and donning plain clothes, sought refuge in the apse. They were discovered by some Moslems who entered the church in search of booty, but they were not harmed. Apparently their lives were spared because one of them revealed where the church plate was kept.[120] Later they were led out of the town to a nearby church where the emir sat in judgment and ordered them confined to a crowded and dirty room.[121]

Thus, after a nine-month siege, the great citadel of Byzantium in Sicily fell.[122] The slaughter was great.

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[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid., p. 261A ("Quoque Busae, Amirae Chagebis filio, qui mortis auctor fuit magnae admirationi fuere.").

[119] Ibid., pp. 261-62. [120] Ibid., p. 262.

[121] Ibid., p. 263B. The emir apparently sat in state in a church ("Captivos nos egredi ex Urbe fecerunt, dolore, ut omittam caetera, vehementi confectos, atque ad Amiram, qui in veteri Majore Ecclesia.").

[122] On the date of the city's fall, see ibid., p. 260C ("Die prima post vigesimam mensis Maji, quarta vero ab eo die, quo murus corruit."); Cambridge Chronicle (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 100) (ἐγένετο ἡ ἅλωσις τῆς συρακούσης μηνὶ μαΐῳ ἰνδ., ια'); Ibn al-Aṯīr (ibid., pp. 136-37); al-Bayan (Amari, Versione, II, 15-16).

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(According to the Arab sources, 4,000 distinguished patricians were killed.[123]) Considering the strategic importance of the city, one is astonished that more was not done by the Emperor Basil to save the situation. According to the traditional account of his grandson Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the emperor did send a fleet to the succor of the city.[124] This fleet, under the command of Adrian, reached the town of Monemvasia in the Peloponnesus and put into its harbor (Hierax).[125] Here Adrian delayed for fifty days, waiting for a favorable wind. According to the court historians, a spirit which dwelt in the forest near Monemvasia told of the fall of the city, first to the local shepherds and then to the admiral himself.[126] Adrian did not believe this until some time later when it was confirmed by some sailors and

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[123] Ibid.; Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 136-37); Nuwairī (ibid., p. 232) (4,000 killed).

[124] Vita Basilii, 308_{21-22} (εἰς ὄνομα τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀρχιστρατήγων καὶ Ἡλιοῦ τοῦ Θεσβίτου ...); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 233_{20-22}; Georgius Continuatus, ed. Muralt, p. 759 (ἐμηνύθη δὲ τῷ Βασιλεῖ ὡς ἡ Εὐράκουσα παρὰ τῶν ἀγαρηνῶν ἐκπορθεῖται. ἀσχολουμένων δὲ τῶν πλωΐμων ἐν τοῖς κτίσμασι καὶ ἐκχοΐσμασι τῆς νεᾶς ἐκκλησίας, ἐγένετο βραδύτης τοῦ στόλου.)

[125] Vita Basilii, 311_{19-21} (τινὲς τῶν διαδρανόντων τὸν ὄλεθρον ἀπὸ τῶν κατὰ Πελοπόννησον Μαρδαϊτῶν καὶ ταξιατῶν τυγχάνοντες, οὐτάγγελοι τῶν ὀλεθρίων διηγημάτων γεγόνασιν.); Genesius, p. 117.

[126] Vita Basilii, 309_{22}-310_{7} (... ἐν Μονεμβασίᾳ δὲ ἐν τῷ λιμένι τῷ καλουμένῳ Ἑράκος ...); Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 234_{14-21}; Genesius, 116_{16-21} (he says Adrian waited for fifty days at the port).

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Mardaites who had escaped from Syracuse.[127] Realizing the hopelessness of the situation, Adrian returned to Constantinople, where, fearful of the wrath of Basil, he took refuge in St. Sophia. When the emperor learned of this, he had Adrian exiled.[128]

From the Arabic sources, on the other hand, one can see that a relief force did arrive at Syracuse, but the city had already fallen. It is quite apparent that this contingent was small, for it achieved little, while four of its vessels were captured by the Arabs, who killed their crews.[129] From the combined testimony of the Greek and Arabic sources, one can see that the intervention of Basil was feeble. Basil needed a scapegoat on whom he could place the blame. This, perhaps, is the reason why Adrian was exiled. If one considers the evidence of the tenth-century sources--namely, Nicholas Mysticus and the court historians--this conjecture seems even more plausible.[130]

In reality the fall of Syracuse cannot be blamed on Adrian or Basil. If one considers the emperor's preoccupation

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[127] Ibid., 117_{4-20}; Vita Basilii, 310_{14}-311_{18}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 235_{7-21}.

[128] Vita Basilii, 311_{22}-312_{11}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 235_{22}-236_{3}; Genesius, 118_{1-7}.

[129] Ibn al-Atīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 137) (266 A.H. = 23 August 879-11 August 880).

[130] Nicholas Mysticus, p. 227 (ἡ Συρακοῦσα ἡ φανίσθη, καὶ ἡ Σικελία πᾶσα, διὰ τί; διὰ τὴν ἀμέλειαν, τοῦ τότε δρουγγαρίου τοῦ πλωΐμου, λέγω δὴ τοῦ Ἀδριανοῦ.)

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with the Aegean and the defense of Cyprus,[131] it us understandable that larger reinforcements were not sent to Syracuse. This is not to say that Basil ignored the West entirely. As I have noted already in Chapter VI, Basil had been gradually exerting his power more directly in the West in the early 870's. With his limited resources, the emperor had to move economically.

By the 870's, Basil apparently realized that success in the West could not be achieved by haphazard expeditions but by gradual and coordinated offensives. He concentrated on southern Italy first. Once secure here it seems likely that Basil would have concentrated, in turn, on the island. The fall of Syracuse can be attributed to the limited resources of the emperor and the geography in which he had to operate. One can argue that greater assistance to Sicily in 878 might have saved Syracuse, but it is a moot point. So long as the Arabs controlled southern Italy and Africa and nine-tenths of the island, Syracuse would be continually vulnerable.

After the capture of Syracuse, its Arab conquerors remained in the city for about two months. Then at the end of July (878) they returned to the city of Palermo, where they were hailed triumphantly.[132] Five days after the

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[131] Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 61.

[132] Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 137) says they returned at the end of du'l-qa'da (5 July-3 August 878); al-Bayan (Amari, Versione, II, 16). According to Theodosius the Monk, p. 263A, they remained only thirty days ("Dies ibi triginta complevimus, propterea quod ad Syracusanas, munitiones emoliendas id temporis voluerunt insumptum."). Theodosius also describes the entry of the Moslem army into Palermo.

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festivities, Theodosius the Monk and the Syracusan bishop were brought before the emir, who had them imprisoned. According to the account of Theodosius, they were all crowded into a dark and dismal prison along with Ethiopians, Tarsites, Jews, Lombards, and other Christian captives. It was among these prisoners that Theodosius met the bishop of Malta, who apparently had been a prisoner for eight years.[133] Here the captives languished for six or seven years until they were ransomed by a Byzantine general, Polita, in 885.[134]

In the same year as the capture of Syracuse, the governor of Sicily, Ǧafar ibn Mohammed, was assassinated by his servants, and was shortly succeeded by al Husayn ibn Rabah after some dissension.[135] Before the Byzantines had a chance to recover from the loss of Syracuse, the new Arab leader attacked (879) the fortress of Taormina, which was perhaps the strongest citadel left on the island.[136] In an encounter with the imperial forces, Husayn won a notable victory, killing many Byzantines, among whom was the commander, Chrysophius, a patrician.[137] Encouraged by these successes, Husayn decided

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[133] Ibid., p. 264A ("Aethiopes, Tharsenses, Hebrae, Langobardi, tum Christiani nostrates e diversis locis profecti, in queis erat quoque Sanctissimus Melitensis Episcopus.").

[134] Cambridge Chronicle (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 100) ἐγένετο ἀλλαγὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ πολίτου [in the Paris manuscript it reads "ἀλλάγιον ἐπὶ τοῦ πολίτα, τοῦ στρατηγοῦ] καὶ ἐζήλθεν ἡ αἰχμαλωσία τῆς συρακούσης ἰνδ... γ'.). See, also, Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 100 (n. 5).

[135] Al-Bayan (Amari, Versione, II, 16).

[136] Ibid.; Ibn Ḥdārī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 215) (A.H. 265 = 3 September 878-22 August 879).

[137] The name of the patrician is found in the Cambridge Chronicle, ed. Cozza-Luzi, p. 32 (ἔτους ,ϛπϝ': ἐσφάγη ὁ χρυσάφιος ἰνδ... ιβ'.)

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to extend his operations to the sea, and launched an attack on the Ionian islands and the Peloponnesus. In this venture he was unsuccessful, as I have noted in Chapter VI.

In the year 267 A.H. (880-881) al Husayn ibn Rabah was either dismissed or killed, for al-Hasan ibn al-ʿAbbās was now the governor of Sicily.[138] Desiring to distinguish himself and remove the stigma of the defeat in the previous year, al-Hasan decided to reduce what remained of the Byzantine possessions in Sicily. Employing traditional Moslem tactics, he sent out flying columns in all directions, while he himself marched directly against Catana and Taormina, where he destroyed the crops and cut down the trees.[139] A Byzantine army under Barsamius came out to meet him but suffered a great loss. Barsamius himself fled into Taormina.[140] According to a hagiographical source, Saint Elias predicted this defeat.[141] Following this victory, al-Hasan destroyed the crops in the vicinity of Baqara and then returned to Palermo.[142] Later in that same year the Byzantines retaliated and inflicted a defeat on the Arabs.[143]

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[138] Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 137).

[139] Ibid., pp. 137-38.

[140] The Cambridge Chronicle (ibid., p. 100) has preserved the name in a corrupted form (ἐτράπη ὁ βαλσαάκιος εἰς τὸ Ταυρομένην ἡνδ.. ιδ'.), but it appears in the right form in the Vita S. Eliae Junioris, p. 494.

[141] Ibid. ("Concedamus hinc, jam enim maximas calamitates ac mala huic civitati imminere ab Agarenis provideo, et dux Barsamius a barbaris vincetus.").

[142] Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 138).

[143] Ibid.; Cambridge Chronicle, ed. Cozza-Luzi, p. 34.

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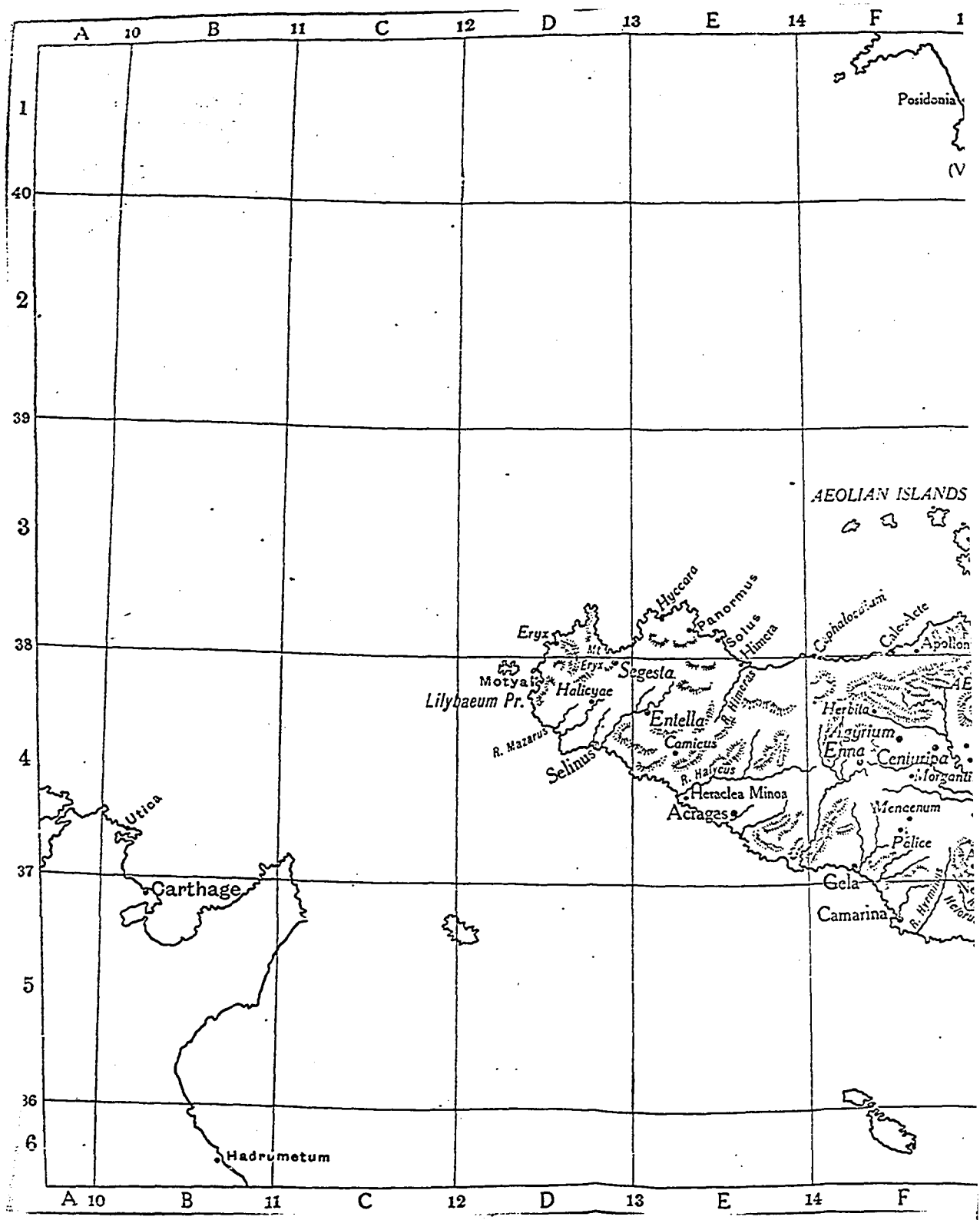

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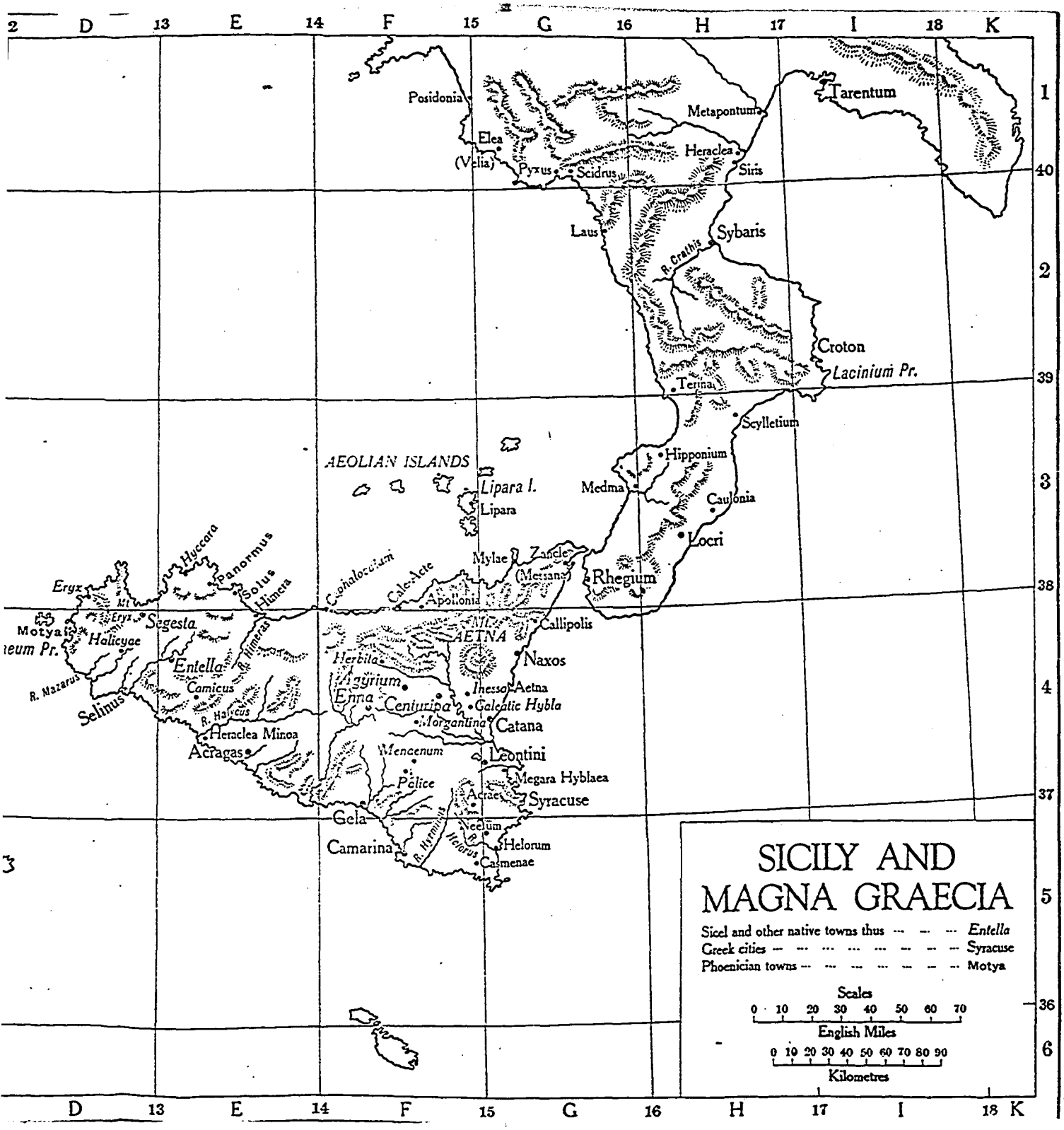

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Perhaps this new Byzantine initiative came as a result of Nasar's activities in the West.[144] This seems a plausible conjecture, since in 882 an Arab detachment under the command of Abu l'Taur (Abu at-Tawr) was destroyed with the exception of seven men.[145] The noted Arabic historian M. Amari is of the opinion that the site of the battle gave rise to the name of the city of Caltavurno, for it means "fortress of Abu l'Taur" (Abu at-Tawr).[146] The Byzantine commander in this battle was probably Mousoulikes. According to the Vita Ignatii this commander, at a difficult moment in the battle, called upon the saint for assistance. The saint appeared and instructed Mousoulikes in what course to follow. Through the intervention of the saint, the Byzantine commander won his victory.[147] Although there is little doubt that the story is apocryphal, it does perhaps contain a germ of truth, for Symeon the Logothete records that a certain Mousoulikes commanded the Cephallonian thematic corps in southern Italy during Procopius' campaign of 880.[148] If the two men are one and the same, and there is little reason to doubt this, it throws new light on Basil's campaign in the West. It appears that Basil was now actively intervening in Sicilian affairs.

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[144] Amari, Storia, pp. 557-58 (n. 1).

[145] Ibn al-Atīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 138).

[146] Amari, Storia, pp. 502-03.

[147] Vita Ignatii, p. 564.

[148] Georgius Continuatus, 845$_{5-11}$ (καὶ εἰς Κεφαλληνιάν τοῦ Μουσουλίκη,)

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This was sound policy, for once the gradual reduction of the Moslem strongholds on the mainland was complete, he could turn to Sicily in earnest. On the other hand, if everything fell to the Arabs, the emperor's task would be so much more difficult. This may account for Mousoulikes' presence in Sicily.

The successful Byzantine initiative had an immediate effect, and al-Hasan ibn al-Abbas was now replaced by Mohammed ibn al-Fadl.[149] Employing the customary tactics, Mohammed sent flying columns throughout the island. He himself marched on the city of Catana, where he ravaged the countryside. The Byzantines were not inactive. According to Ibn al-Atīr they in their turn were busy ravaging Arab lands from their ships. Learning of this, Mohammed marched against them and defeated them. Then he advanced toward Taormina, where he not only devastated the countryside but defeated an imperial force, killing 3,000. The heads of the slain Byzantines he sent to Palermo.[150] Next Mohammed marched against a newly built Byzantine fort, which he took by storm. Here again the Arabs treated the garrison mercilessly, killing the troops and carrying off the inhabitants.[151] According to Amari, this fortress can be identified with the modern town of Polizzi, which is not far from Caltavurno. If this is the case, the Byzantines must have built this fortress soon after their victory under Mousoulikes.[152]

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[149]Ibn al-Atīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 138); al-Bayan (Amari, Versione, II, 17).

[150]Ibn al-Atīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 138).

[151]Ibid. [152]Amari, Storia, p. 562.

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Although the Arab offensive of 881-882 appeared successful, the Byzantine position in Sicily remained unchanged.[153] After a respite, Mohammed tried again in 883 to regain for the Arabs their former momentum. From the point of view of a pillaging raid, one can even classify it as a success, but the status quo remained. According to Ibn al-Aṯīr, Mohammed again divided his forces. One part ravaged the area of Rametta while Mohammed advanced on Catana. Here he pillaged the vicinity, killing many Byzantines, and returned to Palermo in the summer (dū'l-ḥiǧǧa = 11 June-10 July 883) with much booty and many prisoners of war.[154]

In 884 al-Husain ibn Ahmad replaced Mohammed as the new governor of Sicily,[155] but he died soon after a raid in the region of Rametta.[156] To succeed the dead emir, Sawāda ibn Mohammed ibn Ḫafāǧa was sent by the North African ruler.[157] According to Ibn al-Aṯīr, he made a pillaging raid in the regions of Catana and Taormina.[158] Perhaps this occurred early in the year 885, for it was customary for the Arabs to strike early in the year and return by summer. Apparently their attacks were timed with the harvesting of the crops

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[153] Ibid., p. 565, says that the territory of the Christians was reduced to the area between Peloriade and Mt. Etna on the eastern coast.

[154] Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 138).

[155] Mohammed may have been killed. See Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 86; Amari, Storia, p. 566.

[156] Ibn al-Aṯīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 139).

[157] Ibid. [158] Ibid.

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(they would destroy the crops of the Byzantines and then return to harvest their own). This raid of Sawāda was not as successful as it would appear from Ibn al-Aṯīr's account, for an envoy was sent to him from the Byzantine general, Polita, with a proposition for a truce and an exchange of prisoners.[159] Sawāda agreed, and a truce for three months followed. The Byzantines released 300 Moslems, and in return the Arabs released those captives which had been taken during the capture of Syracuse in 878.[160] From the favorable terms which were obtained from Sawāda, one can again see that the struggle was not going as well for the Arabs. Certainly Basil's successful campaign under Nicephorus Phocas in southern Italy in 885 affected the Moslem offensive in Sicily. But there was also a notable change in leadership on the island itself. First in Mousoulikes and then in Polita, the Byzantines found able men. When Basil died in 886, the Arabs again raided the empire's Sicilian territories,[161] but this raid can hardly be compared with the successful campaign of Nicephorus Phocas in the same year. Had Basil not died, perhaps Sicily itself would have been saved. This, however,

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[159] Ibid.; Ibn ʿIḏārī (ibid., p. 216).

[160] The release of the prisoners taken by the Arabs in the capture of Syracuse is not mentioned by Ibn al-Aṯīr. It is found in the Cambridge Chronicle, ed. Cozza-Luzi, p. 34, and in Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 100.

[161] Ibn al-Aṯīr (ibid., p. 139); al-Bayan (Amari, Versione, II, 17).

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is pure speculation, for under Leo VI, problems which Basil did not have took greater precedence.

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CHAPTER VIII

BASIL'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER PERIPHERAL STATES 867-886

As it has been shown in the previous chapters, the Emperor Basil's interests lay primarily in the domain of external policy. Basil sought above all else to pursue the traditional course of an "ideal ruler" whose sacred duty was to restore the boundaries of the empire to its original limits. Undoubtedly Basil was not completely successful, but even where he was only partially successful his heirs, the later Macedonians, were able to continue his policies and thereby advance the boundaries of the empire. During Romanus Lecapenus' reign (919-944), the Generalissimo John Curcuas captured the city of Melitene (May 19, 934), employing Basil's conquests as a springboard.[1] In the last years of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, the fierce struggle between the imperial forces and the Arabs led to more Byzantine victories. Nicephorus Phocas captured Hadath in northern Syria (957) while John Tzimisces took Samosata in northern Mesopotamia.[2] The following years saw even more spectacular successes. Crete was taken by Nicephorus Phocas in

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[1] On the capture of Melitene, see Theophanes Continuatus, p. 416. Ibn al-Atīr (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 154) records the date as May 19, 934.

[2] Yahyā ibn Sa'īd (ibid., pp. 97-98) says that Hadath (Hadat) fell in the month of rabi I 346 A.H. (2 June-1 July 957). Samosata fell in the month of Saban 347 (18 October-15 November 958).

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the spring of 961 after a protracted struggle.[3] He also won notable land victories against the resourceful leader of the Hamdanids, Saif-ad-Daulah, capturing Anazarbus, Germaniceia, Raban, Duluk, and, in 962, Aleppo.[4]

These victories paved the way for further advances in the East during the reigns of Nicephorus Phocas (963-969),[5] John Tzimisces (969-976),[6] and Basil II Bulgaroctonus (976-1025).[7] Only by relating these later successes to Basil's initial offensive can one recognize the significance of his external policy. One can no longer agree with the French historian Rambaud, who said of the victories of the later Macedonians:

> All the failures of Basil I were revenged: the road was opened to Tarsus, Antioch, Cyprus and Jerusalem. . . . Before his death Constantine [VII] could rejoice because

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[3]On the fall of Crete, see Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II, 279-86; G. Schlumberger, Un Empereur byzantin au dixième siècle: Nicéphore Phocas (Paris, 1923), pp. 25-79 (hereafter cited as Schlumberger, Nicéphore Phocas); A. M. Shepard, "The Byzantine Reconquest of Crete," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, 67, No. 462 (Annapolis, 1941), 1021-30.

[4]On the Hamdanids, see M. Canard, Histoire de la dynastie des Hamdanides (Paris, 1933).

[5]During the reign of Nicephorus Phocas, the Byzantine troops also captured Tarsus, Cyprus, Aleppo, and Antioch. On this, see Schlumberger, Nicéphore Phocas, pp. 25-202, 323-435.

[6]John Tzimisces mainly secured the conquests in Cilicia and Syria, but also advanced into Palestine.

[7]For further literature on the personalities and the successes of the later Macedonians, see Runciman, The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and His Reign; C. W. C. Oman, A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages (Oxford, 1924), I, 186-217; Rambaud, op. cit.; Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, II; Schlumberger, Nicéphore Phocas; G. Schlumberger, L'Epopée byzantine a la fin du dixième siècle (3 vols.; Paris, 1925).

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> during his reign so many great acts had been performed for the cause of Christ. He opened the era of Crusades for the East as well as for the West, for the Hellenes as well as for the Franks.[8]

In the light of the evidence one must recognize that without Basil's initial offensive, the later victories would not have been possible. This was Basil's most significant contribution to Byzantine history.

To achieve these successes entailed a certain amount of sacrifice. Although Basil did not leave the empire exhausted through his endeavors, like Justinian I, his external policy did tax the limited resources of the empire to the utmost.[9]

Basil and the Caucasian States

In the Caucasian region, three states flourished in this epoch--Armenia,[10] Iberia (Georgia),[11] and Albania. Of these the one which held the central place in Byzantine policy was Armenia. Armenia proper was bounded on the

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[8]Rambaud, op. cit., p. 436.

[9]This is why Basil had to carefully divide his troops between the East and the West.

[10]On the subject of the Armenians, see the following works: Tchamtchian, op. cit.; F. Tournebize, Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Arménie (Paris, 1910); J. Laurent, L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam depuis la conquête Arabe jusqu'en 886 (Paris, 1919); R. Grousset, Histoire de l'Arménie des origines à 1071 (Paris, 1947); Der Nersessian, op. cit.; C. Toumanoff, "Armenia and Georgia," in the new Cambridge Medieval History, IV (1966), 593-637.

[11]On Georgia, see M. F. Brosset, Histoire de la Géorgia, depuis l'antiquite jusqu'au XIX^{e} siècle (2 vols.; St. Petersburg, 1849-1850, 1856-1857); W. E. D. Allen, A History of the Georgian People (London, 1932).

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northwest by the Chorakhi (Boas) River; on the north by the Kur (Cyrus) River; on the east and southeast by the Araxes River, Lake Urmia, and the valley of the Great Zab; and on the south by the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates and the mountains of Kurdistan.

This mountainous country, which was well endowed with natural resources, was always coveted by its more powerful neighbors because of its strategic, commercial, and military importance. Two important trade routes passed through the Caspian Sea along the Araxes valley to Mesopotamia and the heart of the Abbasid caliphate.[12] Another route followed the Araxes valley to Trebizond and the Black Sea.[13] More significant was Armenia's unique military position. To the Arabs, as to the Sassanids and the Arsacids before them, control of the Armenian highlands protected their lands in the Euphrates and Tigris valley while it provided them an easy access into Asia Minor.[14] In a similar fashion, Armenia was important to the Byzantines as it had been to the Romans earlier, for Armenia provided them with a buffer against possible attack on their eastern themes while it

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[12]These routes had developed quite early; M. Rostovtzeff, Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World (Oxford, 1959), I, 456. See, also, M. P. Charlesworth, Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire (Cambridge, 1926), pp. 76-181; W. H. Warmington, The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India (Cambridge, 1928), pp. 18-34; Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate, pp. 176-84.

[13]This is one of the reasons why Trebizond developed into an important commercial city for the Byzantine Empire. See, on this, A. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 93-95, 112-13, 120-21, 174-75.

[14]Der Nersessian, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

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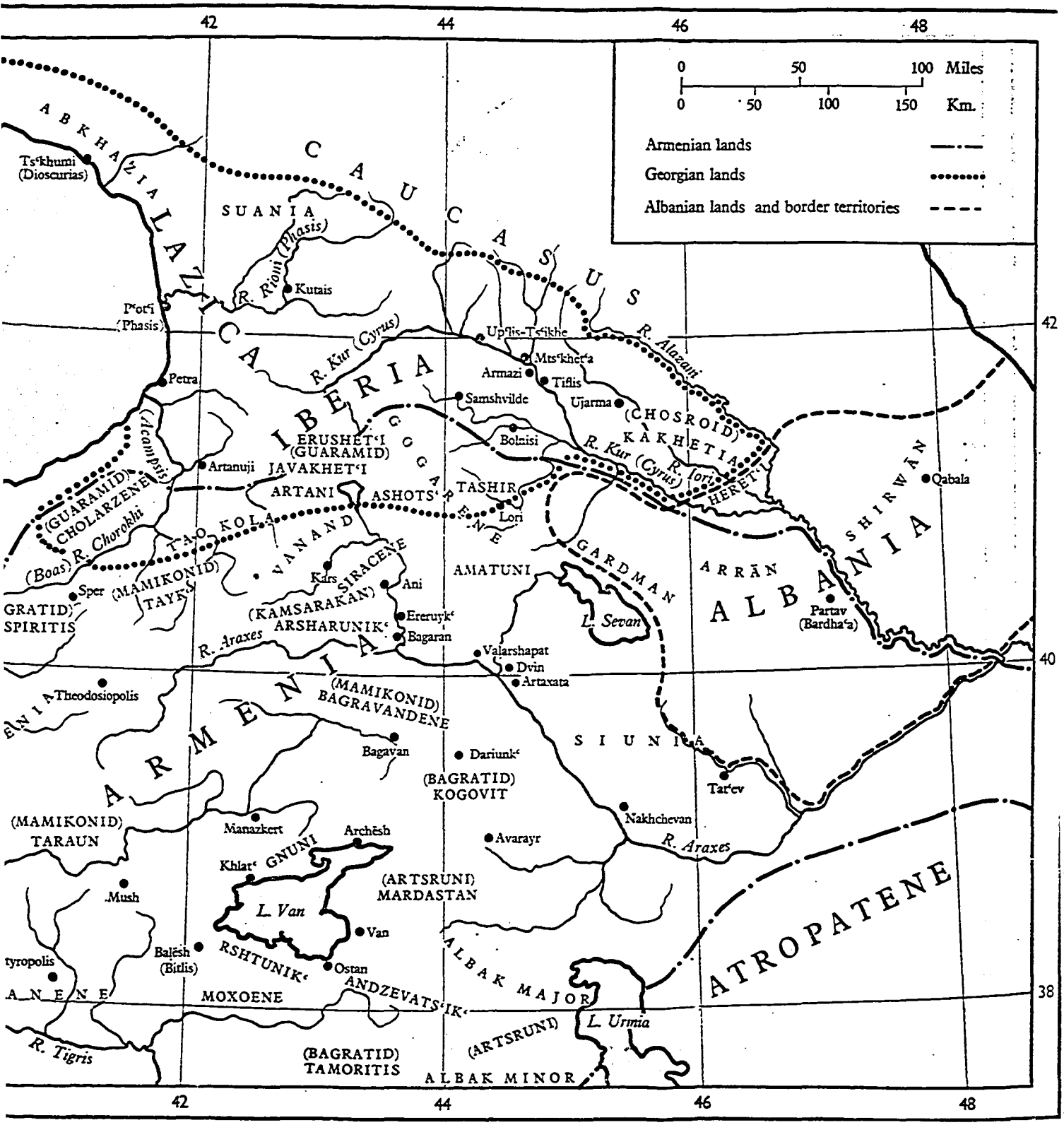

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gave them access to Mesopotamia and Iran.[15] These factors made Armenia a coveted area, resulting in frequent battles between Byzantine and Arab forces.

Arab penetration into Armenia came quite early. As soon as the Arabs had secured their position in Syria and Mesopotamia, they turned their attention to Armenian territory. In 639-640 the Arabs plundered the Armenian province of Taron and the region of Lake Van. Shortly after, in 642, they invaded the northern provinces and captured the city of Dvin.[16] Recognizing the threat this posed to the empire, the Emperor Constans II (641-668) tried to regain Armenia in 647. His attempt was in vain, for the Armenian princes, under their leader Theodore Rstuni (Rstunis), the High Constable, went over to the Arabs. By a peace treaty signed in 653-654 between Theodore and the future Caliph Muawiya, Armenia became an autonomous tributary.[17] Soon after, Iberia, under the Chosroid Patrician Stephen II, and Albania, under Juansher, followed the Armenian example.[18] So it came

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[15] V. Minorsky, "Roman and Byzantine Campaigns in Atropatene," Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, 19 (1944), 243-67.

[16] H. Manandean, "Les invasions arabes en Arménie," Byzantion, 18 (1948), 163-95. The raid is described by the contemporary historian Sebeos, Histoire d'Heraclius, trans. and ed. F. Macler (Paris, 1904), p. 100.

[17] According to Sebeos, p. 134, Constans took 100,000 men with him on his invasion. On Theodore becoming a tributary, see ibid., p. 139 (633-634 A.D.).

[18] C. Toumanoff, "Iberia on the Eve of Bagratid Rule: An Enquiry into the Political History of Eastern Georgia between the Sixth and Ninth Century," Le Muséon, 65 (1952), 17ff.

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about that these three Caucasian states were formed into a single satrapy (called Arminiya by the Arabs) administered from Dvin.[19]

Armenia remained under Arab rule for over 200 years, but it was continuously restless. This period was one of frequent revolts followed by reprisals. Frequently Byzantine intervention on behalf of an Armenian prince wavering in his allegiance led to initial success.[20] But the Armenians' desire for independence, together with their religious separatism, made the victories ephemeral, for the fickle princes promptly returned to the Arab fold.[21]

To curtail the rebellious and independent spirit of these Armenian princes, the Arabs frequently resorted to persecution. In 695, Abd allah ibn-Hatim attempted to suppress them by arrests and confiscations. This was followed by more extreme measures under the reign of the Caliph al-Wald (705-715), who attempted to exterminate the Armenian high nobility.[22]

While these persecutions devastated the country and reduced the nobility, they failed in the long run. The ruin

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[19]Der Nersessian, op. cit., p. 7.

[20]In 654, for example, Constans II launched an offensive supported by both the Mamikonids and Bagratids and established a Mamikonian Mushel as his viceroy. In 685, Justinian II restored Byzantine authority over Armenia and Georgia. Constantine V also intervened in Armenian affairs by supporting the Mamikonids in 744-750.

[21]Byzantine rule was always ephemeral. Constans II, for example, failed in his objective. Justinian II's domination lasted for only eight years (685-693).

[22]Toumanoff, Cambridge Medieval History, IV, 606-07.

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and extinction of many of the dynastic houses profited the few that survived. Instead of numerous weak principalities, a few larger and stronger ones arose.

By the ninth century three princely families were prominent in Armenia. They were the Ardzunis,[23] Bagratids,[24] and Orebelians.[25] The Ardzunis grew to prominence in the later half of the eighth century simply by remaining aloof from the struggles between the pro-Byzantine Mamikonids and the pro-Arab Bagratids. They gained sway over the area between the Araxes, Lake Van, and Lake Urmia (this included the entire province of Vaspurakan and the area north to the province of Ayrarat and east to Lake Urmia).[26] The Bagratids were limited to the area called Syspiritis, where Ashot IV had fled after an unsuccessful revolt in 772. Here he employed the revenue from the silver mines in the territory to rebuild his power. In some instances he purchased further territory, such as the principalities of Arsharunik and Siracene, from the Kamsarakans. In others, he seized territory, as was the case of the Qaysid, seized from the emir Jahhaf, and Taron and southern Tayk, taken from the

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[23]The Ardzunis claimed descent from the Assyrian King Sennacherib.

[24]According to the De administrando imperio, 205_{1-10}, the Bagratids were of Jewish origin claiming descent from David and Bathsheba. See, also, D.A.I. Commentary, p. 171.

[25]The Orebelians owned the province of Siounia, to the east of Bagratid territory.

[26]For the early history of Armenia, see J. Laurent, op. cit., pp. 1-340.

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Mamikonids.[27] By the middle of the century, the main branch of the Bagratids ruled the central Araxes valley, including the metropolis of Dvin and the cities of Ani and Kars, and their dominion extended from Lake Van to the Kour valley (near Tiflis). Another branch had acquired the district of Taron, on the Byzantine frontier. A third branch, which had retired (in 772) eastward to Iberia (Georgia), had become the leading princely family in this region, replacing the Guaramids.[28] As a result of these developments the Bagratids became firmly established in both Armenia and Iberia.

The growth of Arab separatism in the ninth century further enhanced Bagratid hegemony in this area. In 809 the emir of Tiflis, Isma'il ibn-Shu'aib, declared his independence from the Abbasid caliphate.[29] This was followed in the 820's by the establishment of another independent emirate at Arzen. In order to forestall any further losses in this area, the caliphate abandoned its old policy of "Divide and Rule" and decided to seek, as a counterpoise to this separatist movement, the support of an indigenous dynasty. Fearful of the Ardzunis, the Arabs turned to the Bagratids and revived the

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[27] Ibid., pp. 97-104; Grousset, op. cit., pp. 341-42.

[28] They first acquired the lands of Er shet'i and Artäni (Ardahan). Then at the turn of the century they inherited the state of the Guaramids comprising Cholarzene, Javakhet'i, and northern Tayk'. On this, see Allen, op. cit., pp. 69-84.

[29] Grousset, op. cit., p. 344; J. Marquart, Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge (Hildesheim, 1961), pp. 410, 456.

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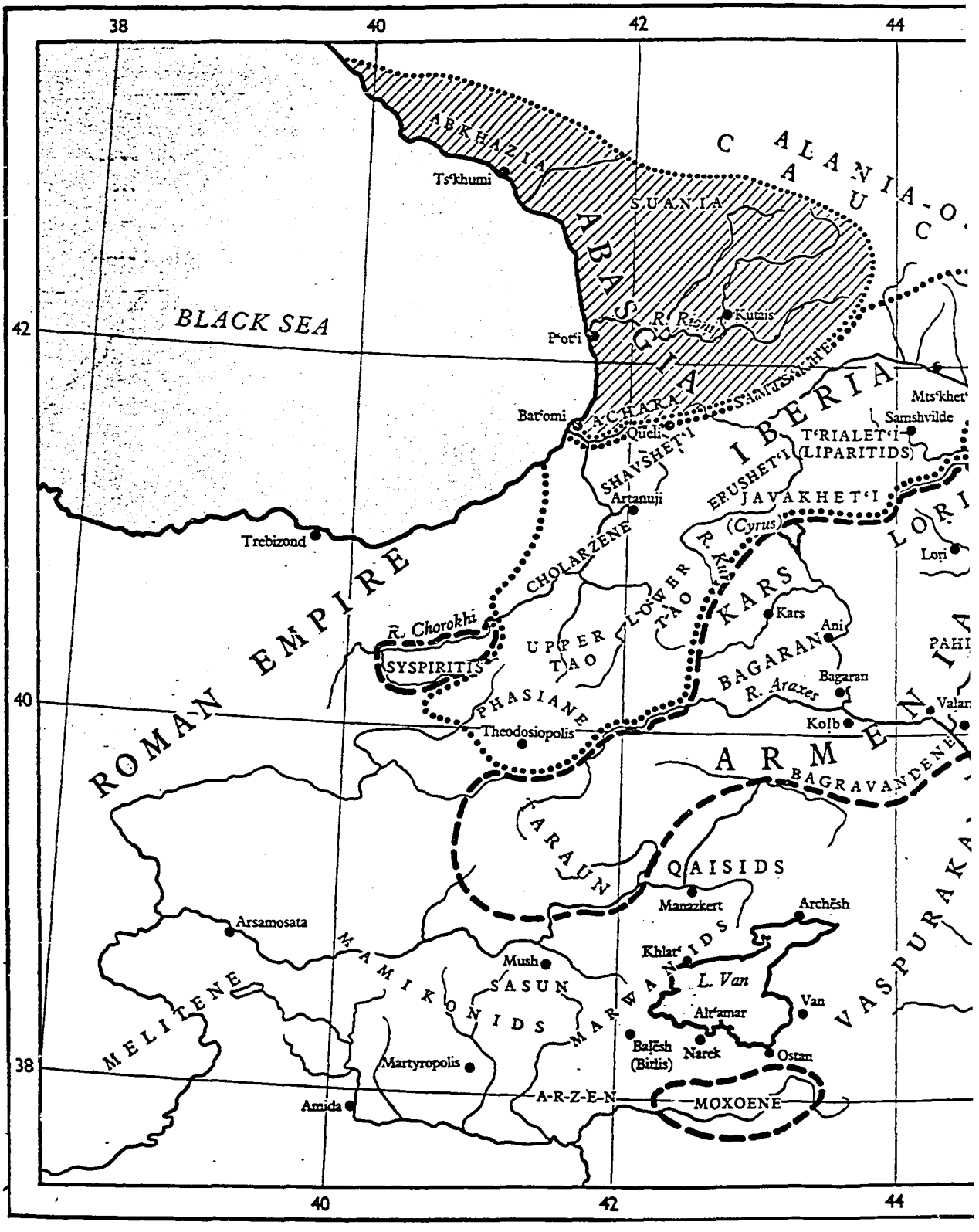

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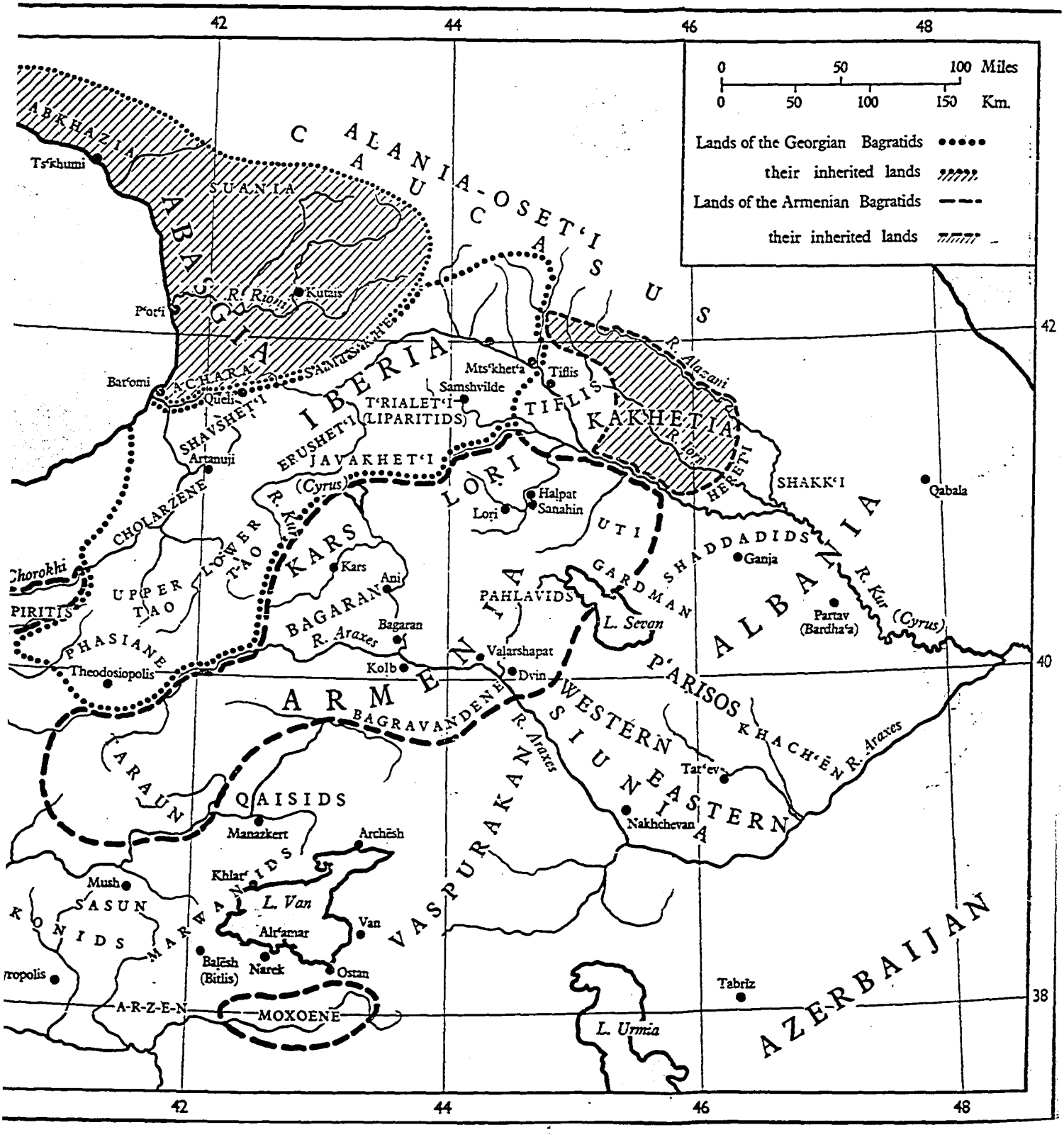

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principate.[30] In 830 Bagarat II, Bagratuni of Taron, was made Prince of Princes.[31]

While these developments were taking place in Caucasia, the Byzantines were preoccupied with numerous problems. The empire, however, never relinquished its claims to Armenia while maintaining diplomatic relations with the other Caucasian states. Both the empire and Armenia found definite advantages in these claims. For the former it provided the pretext for intervention in Armenian affairs in the hopes of regaining imperial domination. The Armenians used the claims to play on the Arab fears by threatening to return to the imperial fold. In reality the Armenians sought independence from both the Arabs and the Byzantines. When Leo V (813-820) conferred the title of Curopalates on Ashot of Iberia, he accepted, for it helped balance the Arabs against Byzantium.[32] But when the Emperor Theophilus (829-842) made two campaigns into Armenia in 837, he found to his dismay that the Armenian princes of Taron and Vaspurakan had allied with the Arabs against him.[33]

In the following years, Bagratid hegemony increased further when the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil (847-861) attempted to crush not only Christian but Arab independence

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[30]Grousset, op. cit., pp. 341-51; Marquart, op. cit., pp. 451-52; J. Laurent, op. cit., pp. 335-36.

[31]Grousset, op. cit., pp. 352-53.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid., pp. 353-55; Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, p. 38; J. Laurent, op. cit., pp. 266-67.

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in Caucasia.[34] The Bagratid Smbat VIII (826-855) cooperated with the caliph's Turkish General Bugha (Boga). This enterprise left Taron in ruins, while Vaspurakan, Siounia, Albania, and Tiflis were subdued and their princes taken to Samarra as prisoners.[35] Although Armenia was now more under the dominion of the caliphate than before, the death of al-Mutawakkil in 861 led to an alteration of Arab policy. Many of the princes were returned and Smbat VII's son Ashot V was recognized as Prince of Princes in 862.[36]

Since his father's domains had not been devastated by the Arab attacks, Ashot V inherited a state far stronger than its neighbors, who tended to look to it for leadership. It was now only a matter of time before the Armenian hegemony of the Bagratids was converted into a monarchy. The Arab and Paulician wars of Michael and Basil, together with the internal dissensions which plagued the caliphate, made it necessary for the Arabs to cultivate the Armenians in general and Ashot in particular in order to forestall further losses. On the other hand, the empire's desire to maintain at least a fiction of imperial power in Caucasia led the Byzantines to pursue a similar course.[37]

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[34]Grousset, op. cit., pp. 355-65; J. Laurent, op. cit., pp. 266-67.

[35]The date of Ashot V being made Prince of Princes is placed between the years 862 (November) and 863 (April). On this subject, see J. Laurent, ibid., p. 267 (n. 7); Grousset, op. cit., pp. 372-74.

[36]Ibid., pp. 368-72.

[37]J. Laurent, op. cit., pp. 264-67; Grousset, op. cit., pp. 372-74; Der Nersessian, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

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Ashot V, therefore, was able to continue extending his power by pursuing a policy of strict neutrality toward the empire and by being conciliatory to the caliphate.[38] Feuds among the other Armenian princes helped, but it was more through his personality and dynastic policy that his power was extended (eventually to include Vaspurakan, Siounia, and Iberia).[39] Finally the national Armenian Church and the princes of the land lent him their wholehearted support and, in 885, requested the Caliph al-Mutamid (870-896) to recognize Ashot as their king. Faced with a fait accompli, the caliph agreed, and Ashot was crowned by the Catholicus George II, restoring the monarchy in Armenia which had been abolished in 428.[40]

From the period of Theophilus' unsuccessful campaign in 838 until the coronation of Ashot in 885, Armenia had played only a secondary part in Byzantine imperial policy. Even diplomatic relations were infrequent. In 862, however, Ashot attempted to further strengthen his position between the two major powers--Byzantine and Moslem--by securing the

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[38] J. Laurent, op. cit., pp. 266-67; Grousset, op. cit., pp. 372-73.

[39] One means that he employed was family dynastic alliances in Vaspurakan, Siounia, and Iberia (Georgia). J. Laurent, op. cit., pp. 268-69; Grousset, op. cit., pp. 374-76. A source for these alliances is John Catholicus, Histoire d'Arménie, trans. M. J. Saint-Martin (Paris, 1841), pp. 122-23, 161. For Ashot's politics in these areas, see Grousset, op. cit., pp. 386-93.

[40] George II was a personal friend of Ashot. On this, see John Catholicus, p. 124. On the coronation of Ashot, see J. Laurent, op. cit., pp. 284-95; Grousset, op. cit., pp. 394-97. The source on the coronation of Ashot is John Catholicus, p. 129.

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support of the empire.[41] His endeavors were hampered by the Armenian churches' refusal to accept Photius' proposal that the Armenians accept the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon.[42] As a result, no further relations developed during the rest of Michael III's reign.

No real change in imperial policy occurred when Basil became emperor, for Basil's policy led him to concentrate all his efforts on restoring the empire's authority in the East and the West. The emperor, nevertheless, did realize the importance of Armenia. In his Arab campaigns of the 870's he made a serious attempt to impose imperial authority on the province of Taron because of its strategic position as an invasion route. If one compares this enterprise with those on his eastern campaigns, one can readily observe that Basil's objective was unchanged--the control of the principal roads and passes.[43] Basil's success in Taron was ephemeral.[44]

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[41] In his letter to Constantinople, Ashot sought the recognition to his principate by carefully recognizing Byzantine suzerainty. The text of this letter is found in Finck and Gjandchizian in Zeitschrift für Armenisch Philologie, II, 16-17 (this work was unavailable to me). On this, see, also, Grousset, op. cit., pp. 382-84.

[42] On the text of Photius' letter to the Armenian Catholicus Zacharia, see Photius, Epistolae, cols. 703-18. The letter on the unification of the Armenian Church with that of Photius has now been shown to be apocryphal. On this, see C. Toumanoff, "Caucasia and Byzantine Studies," Traditio, 12 (1956), 410, n. 7.

[43] See Chapter V on the eastern wars of Basil.

[44] On the problem of Taron and the Byzantines, see N. Adontz, "Les Taronites en Arménie et à Byzance," Byzantion, 9 (1934), 715-38; ibid., 10 (1935), 531-51; N. Adontz, "Les Taronites à Byzance," ibid., 11 (1936), 221-42. See, also, on Taron, Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze, pp. 19, 21, 29, 91, 98, 147-51.

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He relegated Armenian enterprises to a secondary position, pursuing a relatively inactive but watchful policy. If one examines the Armenian and Byzantine sources, one finds complete silence about these two states. The one exception to this rule is the account of the Armenian historian Vardan. This late author holds that when Basil became emperor in 867, one of his first acts was to seek recognition from Ashot. He writes:

> At this period Basilius, an Armenian of the family of the Arsacidae, was elevated to the imperial throne at Constantinople. It being the custom with all the members of this family, on their being invested with kingly power, to have the ceremony of their coronations performed by a Bagratian, Basilius on this occasion sent a chief of the name of Neketas, or Nicodemus, to Ashot, entreating him to come to him for the purpose of fulfilling this ancient custom. Ashot being unable from the nature of his situation, to perform this office in person, sent to Constantinople a splendid crown, which being received, Basilius testified much affection for him, calling him his beloved son, and making a treaty with him for the continuance of their friendship.[45]

The lateness of this source as well as the following factors leads me to suspect that this story is purely apocryphal. First, Ashot was still a prince in 867 (the time of Basil's accession to the throne). Second, Armenia was always considered a vassal state by the empire. This can be clearly seen by the fact that the imperial chancellery always addressed its rulers by the title ἀρχων τῶν ἀρχόντων. The emperor would hardly seek recognition from an inferior.[46]

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[45] Vardan quote by Tchamtchian, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

[46] The titles of the Armenian princes were expressed by the Armenian terms ishkhan, nahapet, and tanuter, and by the Georgian terms mt'avar and sep'etsul, but the Byzantines used the term ἄρχων to express them. Even in the tenth century Constantine, in De administrando imperio, chaps. 43-46, still refers to them by title (ἄρχων τῶν ἀρχόντων.)

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Third, there is a close similarity between Vardan's story and that of Basil's later embassy in 886 which would indicate either a confusion or a falsification of the 867 mission, for there is similarity of details in both.[47]

The caliphate's recognition of Ashot's title in 885 altered Basil's stand on Armenia, for the empire wanted to maintain a buffer against the Arabs if it could not have a vassal. To protect his position in the East, it became imperative for Basil to recognize Ashot's authority and to seek this prince's friendship in order to neutralize any danger from this direction. According to the Armenian historian John Catholicus, Basil therefore recognized Ashot and concluded with him a treaty of peace and friendship.[48] In some ways, however, this recognition proved to be embarrassing to the Byzantines. For this reason one looks in vain among the court historians for Basil's treaty with Ashot. This may also explain why the Armenian rulers were continually referred to, even in the tenth century, as ἄρχων τῶν ἀρχόντων, not kings.

North of Armenia proper there were several nations whose geographical positions rendered them important because their conduct could produce repercussions in Armenia, on the Byzantine frontier, or on the Khazars (Byzantine allies in the North). Unfortunately, little is known about Basil's relations with these nations, because the court historians

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[47] Dölger, Regesten, p. 61, No. 506; Vogt, Basile I, p. 335.

[48] John Catholicus, p. 126; Vardan, op. cit., p. 108.

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were more concerned with the emperor's more grandiose projects.[49] Nevertheless, with Basil's military forces spread thin in both East and West, the emperor realized the importance of these states and sought friendly relations with them.

Nearest to the empire was Iberia (Georgia), which was strategically located, bordering on the Chaldean (Chaldian) theme. Since the eighth century it had been ruled by a branch of the Bagratids.[50] Unlike their Armenian cousins, the Iberians were strictly orthodox in their religion.[51] Because of these factors, relations between the empire and Iberia were always close even though the emperor considered these people vassals. For Basil, Iberian friendship and vassalage were especially important, because the emperor frequently denuded the Chaldean theme of its forces in order to employ them on his other military projects.[52] This left the Byzantine eastern flank exposed. Consequently Basil (as his predecessors before him) gave special recognition to the

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[49] One must look in vain in either the Vita Basilii or in Genesius for any references to these smaller nations. The native historians are also of little assistance, for on the whole they concentrate on internal affairs.

[50] De administrando imperio, pp. 204-23. Iberia was divided into two main branches, Karthli (upper Georgia) and Tao (near the Byzantine frontier). The former was almost constantly at war with the Abasgians and the Arabs. By 908 it was conquered by the Abasgians.

[51] On this, see D.A.I. Commentary, pp. 170-71.

[52] De administrando imperio, pp. 215-23. Iberia was also of strategic importance because of the important town of Ardanoudj, the key to Iberia and Abasgia and one of the great trade centers in this region. De Ceremoniis, ed. Vogt, II, 37-39. See also his commentary, pp. 53-55.

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Iberian princes and conferred the title of Curopalates upon them, although it was seldom bestowed on any but a relative of the emperor.[53] In this fashion the vassalage of the Iberians was maintained by skillful diplomacy.

Other Caucasian States

To the north of Iberia was the vassal kingdom of Abasgia, stretching along the Black Sea coast 300 miles from the frontier of the Chaldean theme to the Nikopsis River.[54] Since the reign of Justinian I (527-565) this kingdom had been Christian and had maintained its orthodoxy.[55] In the ninth century the power of this kingdom grew, making it one of the most powerful in the Armeno-Caucasian region. By the early part of the tenth century (908) the territory of the Abasgians extended inland, up the valley of the Phasis and

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[53] On the title of Curopalates, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 33-35. The importance of the title can be seen by the following examples:

Emperor	Curopalates
Justinian I (527-565)	Justin (nephew)
Maurice (582-602)	Peter (brother)
Phocas (602-610)	Domentziolus (nephew)
Heraclius (610-642)	Theodore (brother)
Leo III (717-741)	Artavasdus (son-in-law)
Nicephorus I (802-811)	Michael (son-in-law)
Michael III (842-867)	Bardas (uncle)

See, also, Vogt, Basile I, p. 431.

[54] De administrando imperio, p. 188: "The coastal area from the limit of Zichia, that is, from the Nikopsis River, is the country of Abasgia, as far as the city of Satirioupolis; it is 300 miles." See, also, Marquart, op. cit., pp. 173-78; C. Toumanoff, "The Chronology of the Kings of Abasgia and Other Problems," Le Muséon, 69 (1956), 73-82.

[55] On the early conversion, see, also, Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire (2d ed.; 2 vols.; London, 1923), II, 114-16.

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the upper Kour valley as far as Tiflis and the Alan Gates (Pass of David).[56] It was therefore essential that the kingdom not fall into the hands of the Arabs, for it could provide them with access to the capital via the Euxine. Imperial policy in Abasgia consequently was directed at maintaining Byzantine suzerainty, bestowing on the Abasgian rulers the dignity of Magister[57] and the title of ἐξουσιάστης at Constantinople.[58] The latter title ranked them higher than ἄρχων and perhaps offered another sop to placate them as vassals.[59] Although there is no evidence about Basil's relations with this state, it would appear that he continued the policy of his predecessors.

Beyond the Caucasus, to the north of the Alan Gates (Pass of David), was the country of Alania, whose territory extended to the bank of the Kuban River.[60] Unlike the Abasgians, the Alans were pagans (until the early part of the

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[56] Runciman, The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and His Reign, pp. 170-71. According to John Catholicus, pp. 189-90, Constantine (the Abasgian king) not only annexed Kathli from the Bagratids but he also took the region up to the Alan Gates.

[57] De administrando imperio, 208_{77} (τὸν μάγιστρον), 214_{16}. On the office, see Bury, I.A.S., pp. 29-33.

[58] De administrando imperio, 208_{77}, 214_{16} (ἐξουσιαστοῦ)

[59] The fact that Abasgia was a vassal state can be seen by the formula used by the imperial chancellery. In the case of Abasgia, the κέλευσις (order or command) was used. This form implied that the empire claimed suzerainty over the region. On this, see De Ceremoniis, pp. 686-91 (κέλευσις ἐκ τῶν φιλοχρίστων δεσποτῶν πρὸς (ὁ δεῖνα) τὸν περιφανῆ ἐξουσιαστὴν Ἀβασγίας.)

[60] On the Alans, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 408-10; Runciman, The Emperor Romanus Lacepanus and His Reign, pp. 171-73; J. Kulakovsky, Alany po svedeiniyam klassicheskikh i vizantiiskikh pisateley (Kiev, 1899) (this work was unavailable to me); Marquart, op. cit., pp. 164-68.

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tenth century) leading a mainly pastoral life.[61] Nevertheless, the Alans were one of the most important satellites of the Byzantines, for they had a fortress, which was virtually impregnable, at the Alan Gates (Pass of David).[62] As a result, Byzantine diplomacy found these people useful, not so much as a Caucasian power but to control other tribes in the steppes. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, for instance, relates how the Alans, whose territory lay adjacent to that of the Khazars, could be used to keep the Khazars in check if they cast a covetous eye on Cherson: "Nine regions of Khazaria are adjacent to Alania, and they can, if so minded, plunder these and so cause great damage and dearth among the Khazars."[63] For their loyalty to the empire, the emperors (perhaps Basil, also) bestowed on the ruler of the Alans the title of ἐξουσιοκράτωρ[64] or ἐξουσιαστήν. The Alans were not vassals of the empire, however, but fell under some other diplomatic category, for the Keleusis did not apply to them.[65]

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[61] Ibid. Their conversion occurred through the work of Nicholas Mysticus. On this, see Runciman, The Emperor Romanus Lecepanus and His Reign, p. 173.

[62] Ibid.

[63] De administrando imperio, 64_{5-8}.

[64] Ibid., p. 63 (καὶ ὁ ἐξουσιοκράτωρ Ἀλανίας.) For the title, see, also, De Ceremoniis, 688_{2}, 688-91.

[65] Titles were often used as a vehicle of diplomacy by the Byzantines. On this subject, see A. Miller, "Studies in Byzantine Diplomacy: Sixth to Tenth Centuries" (Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of History, Rutgers University, 1963).

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The Khazars

The state in the Black Sea region which had first priority in Byzantine foreign policy was that of the Khazars, a Turkic nation.[66] Mentioned unmistakably for the first time in the second half of the sixth century, the Khazars came to rule over a realm which comprised the north Caucasian region, including the area between the lower Don and the Volga. Its eastern frontier followed the Caspian Sea from the mouth of the Yaik to the Derbend Gate. Its southern boundary was the Caucasus range itself. The Pontic coast from the mouth of the Kuban to the Kerch strait was its western frontier. Since this empire was composed not only of many tribes and peoples directly subject to it but also some who merely recognized its authority while retaining their autonomy, the influence of the Khazars was even greater, extending perhaps to the Dnieper.[67]

Once a nomadic Turkic tribe, the Khazars were by the ninth century a settled people and unquestionably the most civilized in the steppes. According to Arab sources, who best describe them, they enjoyed a considerable amount of

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[66] On the Khazars, see Marquart, op. cit., pp. 5-27, 207-305; D. M. Dunlop, The History of the Jewish Khazars (Princeton, 1954); Bury, E.R.E., pp. 402-11; G. Vernadsky and M. Karpovich, Ancient Russia (Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 295-370.

[67] On the problem of the emergence of the Khazars, see Dunlop, op. cit., pp. 3-33. On the theory of their Unigur origin, ibid., pp. 34-40. According to Dunlop there is no positive trace of the Khazars before the sixth century, but these are unmistakably mentioned with the rise of Turkish power in the second half of the sixth century.

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agricultural and pastoral prosperity. The Khazars were extensive sheep farmers, and their country was rich in rice, honey, wax, and fish.[68] By this time the Khazars had even achieved a degree of urbanization. Their most important center was their capital, Atil, on the Caspian at the mouth of the Volga.[69] According to Istakhri (ca. 932), the city was divided into two parts by a river of the same name. The section west of the river was where the Khaqan lived with his attendants and his army. The section east of the river was the commercial center where the merchants lived.[70] Besides this city, the Khazars had three other urban centers of some note. They were Samandar, a city situated at the mouth of the Terek;[71] Balanjar, on a river of the same name, within easy distance of the pass of Derbend;[72] and Tarku, on the road to the Caspian Gates.[73]

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[68] Ibid., pp. 91-93. Bury, E.R.E., p. 404, believes that their most productive lands were in the district known as the Nine Regions (probably the area between the Kuban and Ter rivers. On the Nine Regions, see De administrando imperio, 64_{1-4} ("Nine Regions of Khazaria are adjacent to Alania, and the Alans cause great damage and dearth among the Khazars: for from these nine regions come all the livelihood and plenty of Khazaria.").

[69] On the spelling of the name of the city, see Dunlop, op. cit., p. 91 (n. 8).

[70] Quoted in ibid., pp. 91-93.

[71] Marquart, op. cit., pp. 1-2; Dunlop, op. cit., p. 95. It is described as a city with 4,000 vineyards and many gardens.

[72] Maśūdī says it was the earlier capital of the Khazars. According to Dunlop, op. cit., pp. 49-50 (n. 40), it is probably to be identified with the ruins of Endere near Andreyeva.

[73] On the information of this city, see Marquart, op. cit., pp. 16-17; Dunlop, op. cit., p. 64 (n. 32).

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As to the system of government, the Khazars were ruled by an absolute monarch called a Khaqan who lived in almost total seclusion in a brick palace together with his twenty-five wives, each of them a daughter of a king, and sixty concubines, all of supreme beauty. According to Ibn Fadlan, each one of them had an attendant who served as chamberlain. When the Khaqan wanted to embrace one of his wives or concubines, he sent for the attendant, who brought her quicker than the flash of an eye.[74] The real power of the state, however, was invested in the hands of an official known as the Khaqan B-h, who commanded the army, managed the state, and was a virtual prime minister. He alone, outside of the royal family, had access to the Khaqan. According to Ibn Fadlan, he met the Khaqan each day, entering his presence barefooted, with a piece of wood in his hand. When he greeted the Khaqan, he lit the wood in his presence, and when it finished burning, he was permitted to sit down at the right of the Khaqan.[75]

The most unusual fact about the Khazars was the conversion of the Khaqan and the upper segment of their society to Judaism. The circumstances of the conversion are uncertain, but there can be little doubt that the Khaqan was influenced by political motives, for the acceptance of the Moslem faith would have made him dependent on the caliphate,

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[74]The source is Ibn Fadlan, quoted by Dunlop, op. cit., pp. 109-10, 112.

[75]Quoted by ibid., p. 111.

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while embracing Christianity would have made him the vassal of the empire.[76] The date of this event is even more disputed. Some scholars believe that it occurred in the first half of the eighth century (742 A.D.). Among these are Westberg and Dunlop.[77] Others support a later date in the middle of the ninth century. Among these are Marquart, who supports the year 863.[78] An even later date of 865, on the other hand, is supported by Vernadsky.[79]

The cardinal principle of Byzantine foreign policy in this part of the world was to keep on the friendliest terms with the Khazars. For the geographical position of the Khazar empire and their client states, lying between the Dnieper and the Caucasus and thereby bordering on the frontiers of the empire's chief rivals--the Bulgars and the Arabs--made this Turkic nation a valuable ally. Emperors,

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[76]According to Arabic sources, it occurred early in the ninth century. Masūdī, for instance, records that the king of the Khazars had already become a Jew in the caliphate of Harun ar-Rashid (786-809). On the whole subject, see Dunlop, op. cit., pp. 89-115. According to the Hebrew work of Jehudah ha-Levi entitled The Khazar (Kitab al Khazari), written in 1140, the date is 740 A.D. On this subject and for excerpts from this work, see Dunlop, op. cit., pp. 116-70. There is also an English translation of this work by H. Hirschfeld, Judah Hallevis' Kitat al Khazari (1905).

[77]Both of these scholars base the conversion on the work of Jehudah ha-Levi. On this, see F. Westberg, "Kanalizer vostochnykh istochnikov o Vostochnoi Europe," Z.M.N.P., 13 (1908), 364-414; 14 (1908), 1-52 (this work was unavailable to me).

[78]Marquart, op. cit., pp. 5-17. He argues that it took place after the mission of Constantine-Cyril.

[79]G. Vernadsky, "The Date of the Conversion of the Khaqan to Judaism," Byzantion, 15 (1941), 76-86. See, also, Vernadsky and Karpovich, Ancient Russia, p. 351.

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therefore, frequently called upon the Khazars for aid.[80] Heraclius (610-642), for instance, employed them against the Persians in the seventh century.[81] The situation in the Crimea also made Khazar friendship important, for the empire still possessed the Klimata and the city of Cherson.[82] The latter was the entrepot of the empire's northern trade route.[83] But, what was more significant, this region served the empire as an important watchtower over the movements in the steppes. Khazar friendship was also valuable because the country controlled one of the chief sources of petroleum (naphtha), an important ingredient in the manufacture of Greek fire. The De administrando imperio, for example, remarks that outside the city of Tamatarcha (which was under Khazar control) there were many wells yielding naphtha.[84]

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[80] Dunlop, op. cit., pp. 41-87.

[81] Theophanes, pp. 315-16; Mouses Dasxuranci, The History of the Caucasian Albanians, ed. and trans. C. Dowsett (London, 1961), pp. 81-82.

[82] Pertusi, De thematibus, pp. 182-83. The importance of Cherson and the Klimata is seen by the frequent references in the De administrando imperio, 48_{25-28}, 60_{66-67}, 258-86. Constantine concludes with what should be done in the event Cherson revolted.

[83] On trade, see A. A. Vasiliev, "Economic Relations between Byzantium and Old Russia," Journal of Economic and Business History, 4 (1931-1932), 314-34; A. A. Vasiliev, The Goths in the Crimea (Cambridge, Mass., 1936).

[84] De administrando imperio, 284_{493-94}. Constantine also mentions ($284_{493-506}$) other sites in Zichia and the hinterland Popagia. Tamatarcha is Taman, which was close to the ancient Phanagoria, opposite the city of Bosporos. The city of Tamatarcha, which had a considerable Jewish population, was of great commercial importance to the Khazars.

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Since a considerable part of Byzantine diplomacy was directed to the maintenance of Khazar friendship, good will was a keynote of imperial relations with this nation from the seventh until the tenth century, when Khazar power declined. To maintain these good relations, the empire at times even condescended to marriages with the ruling Khazar family.[85] Justinian II (685-695, 705-711) and Constantine V (741-775), for example, married Khazar princesses.[86]

Because of the many dramatic changes which were taking place in the steppes during the ninth century, the empire was even more concerned with maintaining this policy and preserving the Khazar position in the North.[87] For this reason, when the Emperor Theophilus (829-842) received an embassy in 833 from the Khaqan requesting aid to build a fort near the mouth of the Don, the emperor immediately acted.[88] According to the De administrando imperio, he entrusted the task to the spartharocandidatus Petronas Kamaterus.[89] Arriving at Cherson with ships of war of the imperial navy, he

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[85] On marriages with barbarians, see De administrando imperio, 70_{104}-76_{193}. Here Constantine speaks of the various prohibitions against such alliances. Although he condemns marriage alliances with barbarians, it is quite obvious that he is merely trying to discourage such practices. In reality, however, the empire did employ marriage alliances in their diplomacy.

[86] Ibid., 72_{131-38}. Constantine condemns this but adds that Constantine V was not even an orthodox Christian, but a heretic and a destroyer of images.

[87] Significant changes took place at this time with respect to the Magyars, Uzes, and Patzinaks.

[88] On the embassy, see De administrando imperio, 182_{27-29}; Theophanes Continuatus, 122_{19}-124_{5}.

[89] De administrando imperio, p. 182.

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met ships sent by the Catepan of Paphlagonia (Κατεπάνω Παφλαγονίας).[90] There Petronas and his forces embarked on ships of burden and went to the Don, where they proceeded to build the fortress of Sarkel.[91] From the quick response of the Byzantines and the subsequent reorganization of Cherson, one can only conclude that the emperor acted for reasons of security.[92] It is perhaps in this light too that one must view the later mission of Constantine-Cyril to Khazaria in 860.[93] For the vast majority of the Khazars were still pagans, and Khazaria was the focal point in the steppes.[94] Was the empire looking for added insurance through conversion here? Although nothing is known in the sources about Byzantine-Khazar relations during Basil's reign, it appears inconceivable that the empire would have pursued any other course.[95] As a matter of fact, it would seem likely that

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[90] Ibid., 182_{31-32}.

[91] Ibid., 184_{34}. The site of Sarkel has been found near the village of Tsimliansk on the left bank of the Don. On this, see D.A.I. Commentary, p. 155. According to Marquart, op. cit., p. 28, Sarkel was connected with a whole line of fortresses.

[92] Why it was built is disputed. Some scholars believe it was against the Patzinaks. Others believe it was against the Russians; Bury, E.R.E., p. 417. Most now feel it was against the Magyars, as one Arab source hints. See Marquart, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

[93] On the mission, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 394-96; Dvornik, Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance.

[94] The mission did not accomplish a great deal, but may have established some important centers which were employed later.

[95] The sources are totally silent about Basil's relations with the Khazars.

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the empire extended its ties with the Khazars because of the new dangers presented by the Russians (Rus).[96]

The Russians (Varangian Rus)

A new people who appeared on the horizon of the Byzantine Empire during the ninth century was the Varangian Rus.[97] To the Byzantines the name Rus (Ῥῶς, Ῥώς) meant the Swedish Vikings who had sailed across the Baltic Sea from Upland Södermanland, and East Götland.[98] Appearing first as adventurers in search of trade and plunder, the Rus by the second half of the eighth century were commencing to more up the rivers of western Russia--the Neva, the western Dvina, and the Nieman. Here in the forested and swampy region of the North, the Rus found several Slavic and Finnish tribes, composed primarily of hunters and fishermen. From the archaeological evidence, it appears that these tribes were not separate ethnic groups but compact and stable units united by

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[96] This would seemingly be obvious, for Khazar control extended to the Dnieper. Even if the Khazars could not prevent the Rus from advancing down this river, they could restrict their movements on the Don and Volga rivers.

[97] On the term Ros or Rus, see V. Thomsen, The Relations between Ancient Russia and Scandinavia and the Origin of the Russian State (Oxford, 1877), pp. 38-45; A. A. Vasiliev, The First Russian Attack on Constantinople in 860 (Cambridge, Mass., 1946), pp. 6-13 (hereafter cited as Vasiliev, Russian Attack); Vernadsky and Karpovich, Ancient Russia, pp. 279-80; Dvornik, The Making of Central and Eastern Europe, pp. 307-09. The most complete discussion is in D.A.I. Commentary, pp. 20-23.

[98] T. D. Kendrick, A History of the Vikings (London, 1930); D. Obolensky, "The Empire and Its Northern Neighbors, 565-1018," in the new Cambridge Medieval History, IV (1966), 493-96.

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common social and cultural traditions and by a common language, living on territory they had occupied for centuries.[99] According to the Russian Primary Chronicle, the political picture in the first half of the ninth century was as follows:

> The Varangians from beyond the sea imposed tribute upon the Chuds, the Slavs, the Merians, the Ves and the Krivichians. But the Khazars imposed it upon the Polyanians, the Severians, and the Vyatichians, and collected a squirrel skin and a beaver skin from each hearth.[100]

From the above account one can see that the northern tribes were tributary to the Varangians. Some Rus were extending their authority in the North, while others were drawn by the trade which flourished, through the intermediary of the Volga Bulgars and the Khazars, between the northern forests of Russia and the luxury markets of Baghdad.[101] In order

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[99] The Russian Primary Chronicle, trans. S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), pp. 53-56 (hereafter cited as Russian Primary Chronicle). The view that the tribes were not separate ethnic groups but compact and stable groups which had lived for five or six hundred years on territory they occupied, and that they were united by common social and cultural traditions and by a common language, is supported by archaeological evidence. On this subject, see P. Tret'yakov, Vostochnoslavyanskie plemena (2d ed.; Moscow, 1953), pp. 217-28. (This is summarized in the D.A.I. Commentary, p. 34.)

[100] Russian Primary Chronicle, p. 56. The given date is 6367 (859). The chronology of the Chronicle is, however, highly inaccurate. The Krivichians are also mentioned in the De administrando imperio, 56$_{19}$. According to the Russian Primary Chronicle, p. 55, they lived on the upper reaches of the Volga, Dvina, and Dnieper, and their principal city was Smolensk ("Beyond them reside the Krivichians, who live at the head waters of the Volga, the Dvina, and the Dnieper, and whose city is Smolensk.").

[101] On the Volga Bulgars, see C. A. Macartney, "On the Black Bulgars," B.Ng.Jb., 8 (1931), 150-58; I. Hibek, "Bulghar," in the Encyclopaedia of Islam (Leiden and London, 1960), I, 1304-08.

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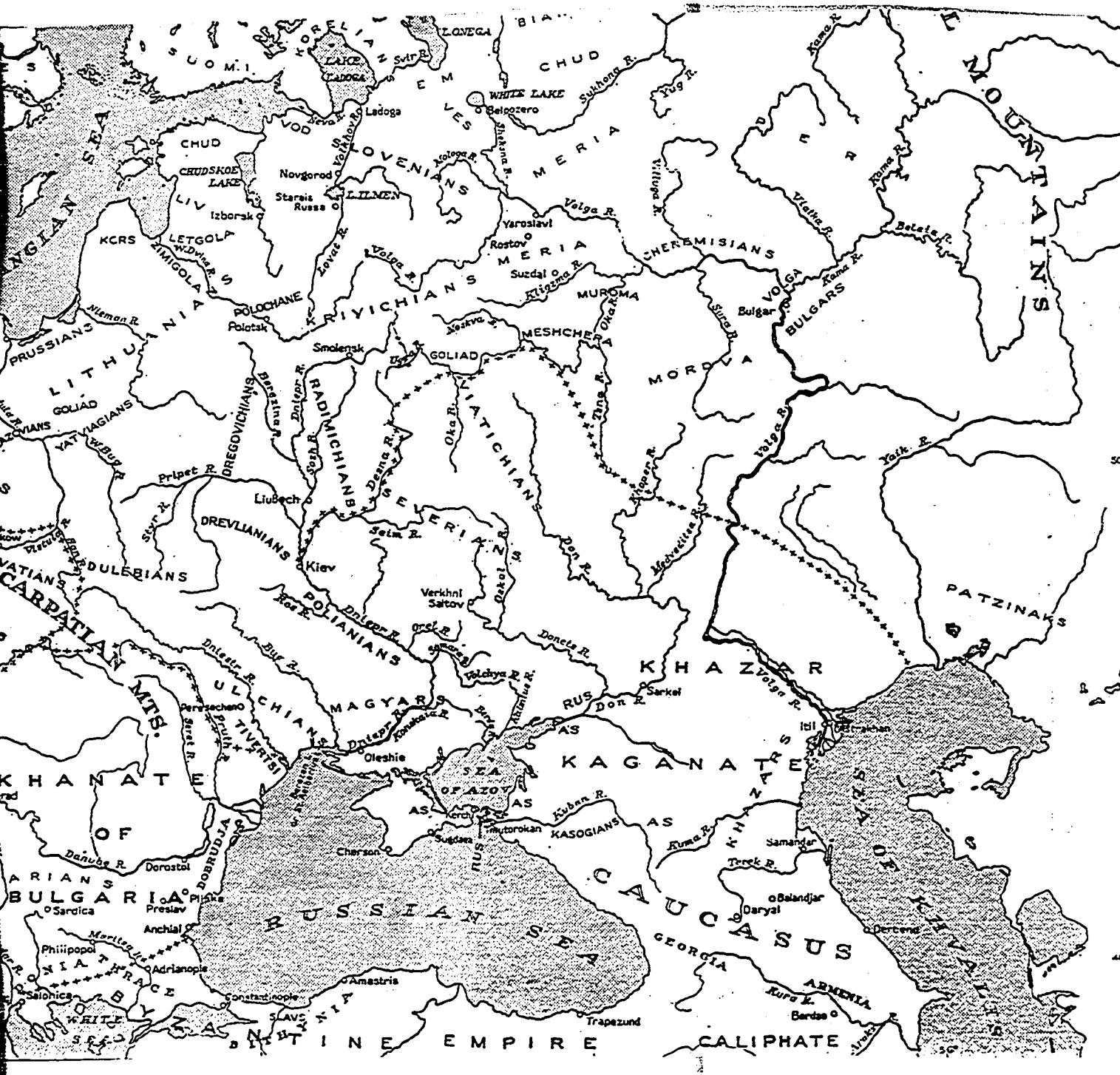

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to take part in this trade, the Rus began to trek down the Volga to Atil (the Khazar capital) and to sail across the Caspian to the lands of the caliphate.[102] The Rus were also drawn by the wealth of the Euxine. They probably reached this area via the Don and the Dniester by the early ninth century.[103] Eventually they learned that the Dnieper flowed into the Black Sea. The Rus realized the potential value of the route and made it, through an elaborate network of rivers, lakes, and portages, the principal artery between their Baltic possessions and the Bosporus.[104]

In the Dnieper region the Rus found other Slavic tribes. Among these tribes the most significant were the Severians, Polyanians, and Uluchians.[105] There was one noticeable difference between the two groups. The southern tribes were more settled, living in towns. According to Vasiliev, this was the result of centuries of contact with the Greek colonists, the Romans, the Byzantines, and the Khazars.[106] As a matter of fact, all of the elements for the foundation of a state had long existed here; only a unifying force was

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[102]Dunlop, op. cit., pp. 208-12.

[103]Vasiliev, Russian Attack, pp. 64-65.

[104]The northern part of the route is described by the Russian Primary Chronicle. The southern part is noted by Constantine Porphyrogenitus in the De administrando imperio. The complete route is best described in D.A.I. Commentary, pp. 23-61.

[105]On these tribes, see the Russian Primary Chronicle,

[106]Vasiliev, Russian Attack, pp. 66-67.

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needed. Such a force appeared in the Rus, whose name was applied both to the state which they had created and to the tribes which they conquered.[107]

Since the Khazars were still in control of Kiev and the middle Dnieper, the first task of the Rus was to overcome this obstacle. Once they succeeded in this enterprise, the Rus inherited the Khazar political and administrative organization, which they employed to create the first Varangian (Russian) state at Kiev. According to Vasiliev and Shakhmstov, this occurred prior to 840.[108] It is perhaps in connection with the creation of this state that the Rus first appeared in Constantinople, during the reign of Theophilus, in 838.[109]

The Russian Primary Chronicle records that while the first Varangian state was being established at Kiev, there was a parallel development in the North. The circumstances by which this occurred were as follows:

> The tributaries of the Varangians drove them back beyond the sea and, refusing them further tribute, set out to govern themselves. There was no law among them, but tribe rose against tribe. Discord thus ensued among them, and they began to war one against another. They

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[107] Ibid., p. 67.

[108] Ibid., p. 68. Perhaps the Russian Primary Chronicle alludes to this ("These are the narratives of bygone years regarding the origin of the land of Rus, who first began to rule in Kiev, and from what source the land of Rus had its beginning.").

[109] The first appearance of the Rus is not mentioned by Byzantine sources, but they are recorded by the Western chronicle, Annales Bertiniani, ed. G. Pertz in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptorum (Hanover, 1826), I, 434. It states that a group of Rus accompanied a Byzantine embassy sent from Constantinople to Louis the Pious at Ingelheim. The embassy is dated tertio Kalendas junii.

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> said to themselves, "Let us seek a prince who may rule over us, and judge us according to the law." They accordingly went overseas to the Varangian Russes: These particular Varangians were known as Russes, just as some are called Swedes, and others Normans, Angles, and Goths, for they were thus named. The Chuds, the Slavs, and the Krivichians then said to the people of Rus, "Our whole land is great and rich, but there is no order in it. Come to rule and reign over us." They thus selected three brothers, with their kinsfolk, who took with them all the Russes and migrated. The oldest, Rurik, located himself in Novgorod; the second, Sineus, in Byeloozero; and the third, Truvor, in Izborsk. On account of these Varangians, the district of Novgorod became known as the land of Rus. The present inhabitants of Novgorod are descended from the Varangian race, but aforetime they were Slavs.[110]

Then the Chronicle adds that two years later, after the deaths of his brothers, Rurik assumed sole authority of all of the districts.[111] In this manner a second Varangian state emerged in the North. Some time after the creation of the Varangian state at Novgorod, two nobles of Rurik, Askold and Dir, obtained permission to sail down the Dnieper with their families to Constantinople (Tsargrad). Perhaps they were preparing a plundering raid. According to the Russian Primary Chronicle, they were, however, diverted in the course of their journey by the city of Kiev. The Chronicle states:

> Upon their inquiry as to whose town it was, they were informed that three brothers, Kii, Shchek, and Khoriv, had once built the city, but that since their deaths, their descendents were living there as tributaries of the Khazars. Askold and Dir remained in this city, and after gathering together many Varangians, they established their domination over the country of the Polyanians at the same time that Rurik was ruling at Novgorod.[112]

In this fashion the first Varangian state came under the control of Askold and Dir.

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[110] Russian Primary Chronicle, p. 56.

[111] Ibid., p. 57. [112] Ibid.

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Employing Kiev as a base, the Varangians decided to carry out their original objective--an attack on Constantinople.[113] The reason for this attack has been much debated, but it appears that widespread rumor of the fabulous wealth of the Byzantine capital was the principal cause.[114] On June 18, 860 (their traditional month for trade and plunder), the Varangian Rus under the leadership of Askold and Dir appeared before "the City" with a flotilla of 200 vessels.[115]

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[113] Attacks of the Rus are also recorded in the Life of George of Amastris and the Life of Stephen of Surozh. The dating of these works, however, is much debated. On this subject, see Vasiliev, Russian Attack, pp. 71-89.

[114] J. W. Thompson, An Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages (New York and London, 1928), pp. 342-43, wrote, for instance, that the expedition was undertaken for the purpose of revenging an insult done to some merchants. Vasiliev, Russian Attack, pp. 143-46, who discusses this problem, concludes that plunder was the chief motive.

[115] The chief sources for the attack of 860 are: (1) Photius, Homilies (III and IV), pp. 74-110 (the Greek text is in C. Müller, Fragmenta historicorum graecorum (Paris, 1870), V, 162-73); (2) a few brief references by Nicetas of Paphlagonia in the Vita Ignatii, cols. 516-17, 532 (according to R. J. H. Jenkins in Ἑλληνικά, 14 (1956), 346, this work was written in the period of 907-909; therefore it adds little of contemporary value); (3) the tenth-century writers: Theophanes Continuatus, 196_{6-15}; Symeon the Logothete (Leo Grammaticus, pp. 240-41); Pseudo-Symeon, 674-75; (4) later derivative writers such as Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 173; Zonaras, III, 404; and the Brussels Chronicle (F. Cumont, Anecdota Bruxellensia (Universite de Gand, Recueil des travaux publ. par la Fac. de Philosphie et Lettres, 1899(, I, 33); (5) the Latin sources: John of Venice, M.G.H. SS., p. 18, and Dandalus, p. 181; (6) Russian Primary Chronicle, p. 60. For a complete analysis of the sources, see Vasiliev, Russian Attack, pp. 90.113. For an analysis of the literature, see ibid., pp. 114-44. The date of the Russian attack is given only by the Brussels Chronicle ("During his [Michael's] reign, on the 10th of June of the 8th Indiction in the year 6368, the fifth year of his reign, the Russians came in 200 ships."). On the problem of the dating, see the literature in Vasiliev, Russian Attack, pp. 145-49. According to the De administrando imperio, 58_{19-20}, the month of June was the traditional period for them to sail down the Dnieper.

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From the first homily of Photius one gathers that the raid was completely unexpected--the Emperor Michael was away campaigning in the East and the imperial fleet was also absent.[116] Perhaps the Rus had learned of these conditions through merchant spies prior to their attack.[117] The Rus, therefore, were able to ravage the suburbs. According to the Vita Ignatii, they extended their depradations beyond the straits onto the Princes' Islands.[118] According to Photius, no resistance was offered, but the divine aid of the Virgin was summoned by Photius, at which point they departed.[119] Quite different is the account of Symeon the Logothete. Here Michael returned to the city when he heard of the attack and made his way with great difficulty across the straits, and together with Photius invoked the Virgin's aid. When he and Photius took up the holy maphorion and dipped it in the sea, a storm arose and destroyed the

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[116] Photius, Homilies (III), p. 89:
"Where is now the Christ-loving emperor? Where are the armies? Where are the arms, the engines, the military deliberations and preparations? Is it not an attack of other barbarians which has removed and drawn to itself all these things? The emperor endures long labours beyond the frontier, and the army has marched away to toil with him; whilst we are worn down by the ruin and slaughter before our eyes, which have overtaken some and are about to overtake others. As for this fierce and barbarous Scythian tribe, having crawled out of the very outskirts of the city, like a wild boar it has devoured all around about."

[117] For the general situation of the capital, see Vasiliev, Russian Attack, pp. 150-51.

[118] Vita Ignatii, cols. 516-17, 532C.

[119] Photius, Homilies (III), p. 95; ibid., IV, pp. 101-03 ("But we found God's compassion, routing them and checking their onset.").

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barbarians. Only a few of the Rus escaped.[120] Be that as it may, the attack failed to achieve any result other than to bring to the attention of the empire the need to take some steps to prevent a second attack.[121]

Since the appearance of the Rus endangered the Byzantine position in the Euxine and upset the balance of power in the steppes, the empire acted quickly. Knowing that the Khazars, their old allies in the North, had similar interests, the imperial government, perhaps encouraged by Photius,

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[120]Leo Grammaticus, pp. 240-41. In my opinion, the reason for this discrepancy in the two sources is due to the fact that Photius' homilies, as they have come down to us, were remodelled and embellished for publication, as both Bury, E.R.E., p. 420 ("If the sermons which he preached in St. Sophia were delivered as they were written, we may suspect that they can only have been appreciated by the most educated of his congregation."), and Vasiliev, Russian Attack, p. 214 ("It seems to me that Photius' second homily has not reached us in the form in which it was delivered."), have stated earlier. If they were remodelled during Basil's reign, the explanation as to why they would have excluded a reference to Michael becomes obvious.

[121]In Photius and Theophanes Continuatus there is a record of the destruction of the Russian fleet. On the other hand, John of Venice records a victory "Cum Triumpho." The silence of the first two sources and the comments of John of Venice, however, should not be taken seriously, for even the Russian Primary Chronicle records a failure (p. 60). The letter of Nicholas (Epistolae, ed. Societas aperiendus fontibus in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Epistolae (Berlin, 1925), VI, 479-80) which speaks of the pagans who devastated the environs of the city going unpunished does not alter this interpretation, for the description is too general and rhetorical to use as evidence. (On this, see Photius, Homilies, p. 78 (n. 16). On the question of the direction from which the attack came, there is considerable debate. Some support Kiev, others the Tauric peninsula. For literature on this subject, see Vasiliev, Russian Attack, pp. 169-75. Vasiliev himself favors Kiev. The ardent supporter of the Tauric peninsula is V. Mosin, "Varyago-Russian Problem," Slavia, 10 (1931), 109-36, 343-79, 501-37; V. Mosin, "The Origin of Russia: The Normans in Eastern Europe," Byzantinoslavica, 3 (1931), 38-58, 285-307 (these two works are in Russian). On the duration of the siege and the siege, see Vasiliev, Russian Attack, pp. 188-214.

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decided to employ the services of the Church to mitigate these changes, by extending imperial control through conversion. It must be remembered that at this time the majority of the Khazars and perhaps even the Khaqans were pagan. In 861, in response to a Khazar embassy, two brilliant philologists, Constantine and his brother Methodius, were sent to Khazaria.[122] Here at the Khaqan's residence at Samandar, Constantine engaged in theological disputations with Jewish rabbis who held prominent positions at court, and won two hundred converts. More significant was the fact that an alliance between the empire and Khazaria was reaffirmed and the Khaqan professed a readiness to serve the empire when needed.[123] The exact nature of the services which the Khaqan was to give is not known, but it may be that one of these was to give safe conduct to missionary activity in Khazar lands. Although there is no literary evidence for this hypothesis, this would appear logical, considering the statesmanlike caliber of Photius. This theory is enhanced by some supplementary indications. First, in Theophanes Continuatus, one reads that after the Russian withdrawal an embassy came to Constantinople asking to be converted to Christianity.[124] Second, in a circular letter (864-867) to the Eastern Patriarchs, Photius recalls the invasion of the Rus but now adds that they have changed their Hellenic and godless religion

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[122] Dvornik, Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance, pp. 358-61.

[123] Ibid., pp. 358-70. [124] Theophanes Continuatus, 196_{15}.

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for the pure and unadulterated faith of the Christians, and have placed themselves under the protection of the empire, becoming good friends.[125] On the basis of these two sources one must conclude that the rudiments of Christianity among the Rus were certainly established under Michael's reign. As the only cultural contacts the empire had with the Rus at this time was through its possessions in the Crimea, Christianity must have been introduced via Cherson and Khazaria.[126]

Since harmony and peace in the North were especially important for the successful execution of Basil's plans against the Moslems, his accession to the throne in 867 brought no noticeable change in imperial policy toward the Rus. As a matter of fact, if we can accept the eulogistic account of his grandson, he even continued this program. For the Vita Basilii records that Basil, through generous gifts of gold, silver, and silken goods, made an agreement with the "most unconquerable and most impious people of the Russes" and concluded with them a treaty of peace.[127] The account adds that once peace was concluded, Basil persuaded the Russians to adopt Christianity and had Ignatius send them an archbishop.[128]

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[125] Photius, Epistolae, cols. 736-37. On the dating, see Grumel, Les Regestes, pp. 88-89.

[126] It is doubtful that missions could have come from the West at this time, even though Constantine and Methodius were at work in Moravia.

[127] Vita Basilii, 342_{20}-343_{4}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 242; Zonaras, XVI, 10.

[128] Vita Basilii, 343_{1-4}; Michael Glycas, p. 553.

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Although Constantine's account perhaps exaggerates his grandfather's role in connection with the conversion of the Rus, for apparently some progress was made under his predecessors, one must, on the whole, regard this statement as consistent with some of Basil's other policies--such as the conversion of the Slavs in the Peloponnesus and the conversion of the Serbs and the Jews. Little else, however, can be added due to the scarcity of the sources.

The Balkans: The Bulgars

Unlike the Northern policy, about which there is a scarcity of information, some detail is known about imperial policy in the Balkans.[129] Here the people that preoccupied the empire were the Bulgars, originally of Turkic origin. According to exhaustive studies on the subject, the people who came to constitute this nation were, during the early seventh century, merely a part of the vast empire of the Onogur-Bulgars.[130] On the basis of the sources of the period, the Onogur-Bulgars were on friendly terms with the Byzantines. John of Nikiu, for instance, records that their leader Kovrat was baptized and brought up as a child in the capital.[131]

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[129]For the Bulgars, see Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire, II, 331-38; Bury, E.R.E., pp. 332-74, 381-92; Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire. Complete literature on this subject can be found in Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica, I, 108-31.

[130]Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire, pp. 1-24.

[131]Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu, trans. R. H. Charles (London, 1966), p. 197.

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This kingdom, however, was ephemeral. Shortly after the death of Kovrat in 642, it disintegrated under the impact of the westward-moving Khazars.[132] Some of the tribes were made tributary to the Khazars but others simply migrated from their homeland. One such group, under the leadership of Asparuch, crossed the steppes and descended into the Danube delta.[133] This region was only to be a temporary home; they soon advanced southward. Although they invaded a region which had been virtually lost to the empire because of the Slavic invasions, the crossing of the Danube was viewed by the Byzantines as a serious threat to their position in the Balkans. The Emperor Constantine IV (668-685), therefore, advanced against the Bulgars, determined either to drive them back across the Danube or subdue them.[134] The Byzantine campaign failed, the Bulgars swept through Moesia,[135] and the Byzantines accepted the fait accompli and made a formal treaty with them. As a result of this recognition, the first Bulgarian state came into existence.[136]

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[132] After the initial disintegration, the tribes were divided among various princes of the House of Dulo. One brother, Baian, stayed and became a tributary to the Khazars. A second brother, Cotragus and his people eventually settled by the middle Volga and the Kama and became known as the Volga Bulgars. The third brother, Asparuch, crossed the Carpathians and the Danube. (Theophanes, pp. 336-39, places these events in the year 6126 = 679-680 A.D.).

[133] Asparuch supposedly first settled on the island of Peuke in the Danube. Marquart, op. cit., p. 529.

[134] Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire, pp. 26-27.

[135] Ibid., p. 27.

[136] Theophanes, p. 358. (The emperor pledged to pay an annual tribute to the Bulgars under this treaty.) Dölger, Regesten, p. 243.

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The exact extent of this kingdom is difficult to establish. Runciman is of the opinion that its southern boundary was the Balkan range and its western probably the river Isker. He believes that its northern boundary extended beyond the north bank of the Danube, and included Bessarabia as far as the Dniester and the bulk of the Wallachian plain.[137] Within this area lived several Slavic tribes which had been formerly under Avar domination. Fearful, perhaps, of imperial restoration, these Slavic tribes welcomed the Bulgars. Being a statesman, Asparuch recognized the potentialities of this situation and immediately proceeded to organize these tribes (which he governed directly from his palace constructed at Pliska).[138] Relations between the Slavic and Bulgar elements in these formative years are not clear, but it appears that an early fusion did not take place. Perhaps only an alliance existed, and that is why, in the Bulgar wars, Byzantine writers refer to the enemy as the Bulgars and the Slavs.

Of the organization of the Bulgars not a great deal is known. As in all Turkic tribes, the social fabric was based on the clan system, and at the head of each clan was a khan. At the head of these khans was a sublime khan (Κάνας ὑβηγή), who apparently was merely a prince among princes.[139] The two chief ministers of the state were called kanarti and

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[137] Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire, p. 27. See, also, Bury, E.R.E., pp. 337-38.

[138] On Pliska, see ibid., pp. 332-34.

[139] Marquart, op. cit., p. 495. Later in the ninth century his title became that of Knyaz (the Slavic word for prince).

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tarkan. The nobles were divided into two classes: the upper consisted of boyars while the lower consisted of bagains.[140] The kingdom itself was divided into ten administrative divisions, governed by officers whose titles are known to us only by the equivalent term "count."[141]

From its first appearance in the Balkans, this new state began to play a key role in the policy and destinies of the Byzantine Empire. At times it was a foe of Byzantium, but on other occasions it was its savior. In 705, for example, the Bulgars assisted Justinian II to regain his throne. For his service, Justinian II bestowed the dignity of "Caesar" on Khan Tervel.[142] In the Arab invasion of 717-718 the Bulgars again performed a service for the empire by making a crucial raid on the Arab encampment.[143] During the reign of the Emperor Constantine V (741-775) the Byzantines altered their traditional policy toward this new nation. Viewing the Bulgars as a threat to its flank, the empire decided to make a serious attempt to regain Moesia from them and restore its northern frontier to the Danube. Exploiting the kingdom's social weakness by fanning the constant antagonism between the boyar aristocracy and the Slavs,

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[140]Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire, pp. 29, 284-88.

[141]Bury, E.R.E., p. 335 (n. 4).

[142]Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire, p. 31 (this initial understanding eventually broke down, and Justinian at a later date was at war with Tervel).

[143]Ibid., p. 33.

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Constantine V carried out a total of nine carefully coordinated land and sea invasions of Bulgaria.[144] In the end, however, his exhausting victories brought him no closer to his goal. Bulgaria was still on the map.

In the ninth century, the empire again resumed the policy of Constantine. Exploiting the preoccupation of Khan Krum, who was involved with internal problems after the crippling wars of the eighth century, the Emperor Nicephorus I (802-811) reopened the conflict. This time, however, it was the empire that suffered in the conflict, for Krum proved to be a capable leader. He not only defeated an invading imperial army under the emperor, but added to this humiliation by making a drinking cup out of the dead emperor's skull. Then he advanced on the capital itself, which he besieged. The timely death of Krum, who suffered a stroke, removed this danger.[145]

A noticeable change in Bulgar policy followed Krum's death. His son and successor, Omurtag, sought instead to profit from his father's victories while they were still fresh in the minds of the Byzantines. In 815 he signed a favorable thirty-year peace with the empire.[146] Perhaps external problems motivated the Bulgar ruler to conclude this peace. For Omurtag took advantage of the satisfactory

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[144] Ibid., pp. 35-43. [145] Ibid., pp. 47-70; Bury, E.R.E., pp. 339-59.

[146] Ibid., p. 360.

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terms to turn his attention toward the western part of his empire. Here the expanding Frankish empire was threatening the Bulgar position in the Balkans and extending its influence south of the Danube.[147] Preoccupied with these problems, Omurtag remained on friendly terms with the empire. During the civil war of Thomas the Slav, he even intervened in behalf on the Emperor Michael II (820-829).[148]

Concerning the next three decades there is a scarcity of evidence about the Bulgarian empire. There is even some doubt about the reign of his successor, Malamir. It is possible that the reign was two reigns, and that Malamir (831-836), after five years, was succeeded by Presian(836-852).[149] Be that as it may, peace between the empire and Bulgaria continued, marked only by a few incidents. One of these was the return from captivity of the Macedonians who had been transported beyond the Danube during Krum's earlier invasion in 813.[150] Another was Bulgar expansion into the region west of Thessalonika. Although this drive brought an area which was nominally Byzantine under Bulgar control, it did

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[147] Ibid., pp. 363-69; Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire, pp. 84-88.

[148] On Omurtag's role in the revolt of Thomas the Slav, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 100-02; Vasiliev, Byzance et les Arabes, I, 41-44.

[149] Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire, pp. 292-97, doubts this.

[150] The return of the Macedonian captives is recorded by Georgius Continuatus, p. 818. (See Chapter II on this problem.)

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not seek the incorporation of Thessalonika but only the subjugation of the Slavic tribes in western Macedonia.[151]

Unfortunately little else is known about Byzantine-Bulgar relations. The principal interest of the Bulgars was elsewhere. As in the previous period, they were faced with the problem of the Franks. This problem they solved with a treaty in 845.[152] But a more serious problem faced the Bulgars in the South. This was the growing power of Serbia under Vlastimer.[153] Nominally recognizing the emperor as their suzerain, the Serbs presented to the Bulgars a threat to their southern boundary and forestalled a Bulgar ambition of expansion toward this region. To prevent a continued growth of this Serbian state (which may have also been encouraged by the empire), the Bulgar khan decided on al all-out offensive. According to the De administrando imperio, Presian, a Bulgar prince, invaded the Serbian state with the intention of subjugating its people. The struggle lasted three years. In the end the Bulgars found only humiliation and defeat.[154]

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[151] Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire, p. 87; Bury, E.R.E., pp. 371-73. The attack on this region is mentioned in the story of the Macedonians.

[152] The treaty is mentioned by the Annales Fuldenses, ed. G. Pertz in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptorum (Hanover, 1826), I, 364.

[153] De administrando imperio, 154_{35-38}:
"And up to the time of this Vlastimer the Bulgarians lived at peace with the Serbs, whose neighbors they were and with whom they had a common frontier, and they were friendly one toward another, and were in servitude and submission to the emperor of the Romans and kindly treated by them."

[154] Ibid., 154_{38-42}. See, also, D.A.I. Commentary, p. 134.

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Under Khan Boris (852-889), a young and impressionable ruler, the Bulgars sought foremost to restore the military prestige of the kingdom. Initially, therefore, the young khan turned his attention toward the empire, where he hoped to intimidate the Regent Theodora through the threat of an invasion. The diplomacy of the regent, however, proved a match for the ambitious khan. According to an account in Genesius, she informed the khan that if he invaded the empire she would personally lead the imperial forces against him. Thus if he won, he would have no glory in defeating a woman, and if he lost he would be ridiculous.[155] Although the story is certainly apocryphal (an ambitious ruler would hardly be deterred by such a reply), it perhaps contains a germ of truth, for the Byzantine frontier was revised in favor of the Bulgars. During the next decade no further incidents occurred between the two powers.

These peaceful conditions with the empire, which was preoccupied with the Arab wars, enabled the Bulgars to turn their attention to the Serbs and the Franks. From the former the young khan sought, above all, the recovery of Bulgar prestige. Consequently the Bulgars made another invasion of the small kingdom. Khan Boris, however, was no more successful than his predecessor in subjugating the Serbian kingdom. For the sons of Vlastimer--Muntimer, Stroimer, and Goinikas--presented a united front against the Bulgar forces

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[155] Genesius, pp. 85-86 (Genesius does not give the name of the Bulgar khan); Theophanes Continuatus, p. 162, calls the khan Boris (Βώγωρις).

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and inflicted a severe reverse on them, capturing Vladimir, Boris' son, and twelve high-ranking boyars.[156]

With the Franks the situation was somewhat different. The treaty of 845 was followed by several years of peace between the Franks and the Bulgars. For the preoccupation of the former was the subjugation of the Slavic tribes and, above all, the kingdom of Great Moravia. This kingdom had come into existence through the work of its founder, Mojimer, who made a successful stand against Frankish encroachments and thereby secured his position.[157] His successor, Rastislav (846-869), continued this same policy, but needing further assistance, turned to Boris. Realizing that the Franks were a common threat, Boris made an alliance with Rastislav in 853.[158] The alliance profited Rastislav more, for he apparently enlarged the state as far as Tisza, where his realm became contiguous with that of the Bulgars.[159] This rapid growth of the Moravian state had an immediate effect on the politics of the Balkans. It aroused the jealousy of both the Franks and the Bulgars. Putting aside their former differences, Louis the German and Khan Boris made a common pact in 862 to crush the newly founded Slavic state.[160]

To Rastislav this new alliance meant certain annihilation unless aid could be obtained. In a masterful move, he

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[156] Ibid., 159$_{42-53}$.

[157] Dvornik, The Slavs, pp. 70-71, 80-81.

[158] Bury, E.R.E., p. 383. [159] Dvornik, The Slavs, p. 81.

[160] Bury, E.R.E., p. 383; Dvornik, The Slavs, p. 81; Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire, pp. 99-130.

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turned to Constantinople. In 862 his ambassadors arrived in the city to ask for an alliance from the emperor to counter this threat to his kingdom. Perhaps his ambassadors even pointed out to the emperor the danger of the Franco-Bulgarian alliance to the empire's position.[161] Be that as it may, the emperor and his able advisers (Bardas and Photius), who had largely ignored the Balkans because of the Arabs, grasped the gravity of these developments. To the empire the Franco-Bulgarian alliance meant a threat to its position in the Balkans through an extension of Frankish authority. For one of the provisions which Boris accepted from his new ally was that he promised to receive Christianity from the Frankish missionaries.[162] This was especially ominous at this time because a religious quarrel between Pope Nicholas I (858-867) and the Patriarch Photius was at its height.[163] The empire decided to act quickly before it was too late.

Realizing that a Moravian-Byzantine alliance could develop into a potential encircling movement which could in turn be employed against the Bulgars if the case need be, the empire immediately responded to the pleas of Rastislav and sent a mission. Headed by two brothers, Constantine-Cyril and Methodius, who were noted philologists and had a knowledge of the Slavic dialect of Macedonia, this mission

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[161] Dvornik, Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance, pp. 212ff.

[162] Bury, E.R.E., p. 383; Dvornik, The Slavs, p. 81.

[163] On the complicity of this problem, see Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 91-131.

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brought with it the Glagolithic alphabet. Welcomed by Rastislav, the two brothers began to translate the Bible and liturgy into Slavonic.[164]

The empire, however, did not rely simply on the above alliance to alleviate the threat to its position in the Balkans. It also decided upon direct intervention. Perhaps the recent victories over the Arabs had strengthened the position of the empire and heightened its prestige to the degree that the imperial government felt confident in its strength. The timing was auspicious, for Khan Boris was weakened by famine at home and was absent assisting his ally Louis against Karoliman.[165] Byzantine forces appeared on the Bulgarian frontiers and an impressive naval demonstration was made off the Bulgarian coast.[166] Faced with the possibility of fighting a two-front war, Boris was persuaded to accept the Byzantine demands.

The empire was magnanimous in victory. It demanded nothing more than the abandonment of the Frankish alliance and the acceptance of Christianity from Constantinople. As

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[164]Dvornik, The Slavs, pp. 82-102; Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire, pp. 98, 115-17. On the Glagolithic alphabet, see ibid., pp. 297-99.

[165]Ibid., p. 102. The source is the Annales Fuldenses, p. 379.

[166]Georgius Continuatus, p. 824, speaks of the military intervention. Theophanes Continuatus, pp. 162-63, relates two other stories. According to one, Boris' conversion came as a result of the work of a monk, Theodore Cupharas, and his (Boris') sister, who urged the khan to abandon his heathen faith and call upon the Christian God for assistance in a great famine. Another story relates how an artist's (Methodius') conception of the Last Judgment played a decisive role.

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a sop to the Bulgars the empire even agreed to some territorial concessions.[167] In 864 Boris received baptism from the Byzantines, taking the name of Michael, after the emperor who stood as sponsor for him.[168]

The baptism of Boris brought the Bulgarian state within the orbit of Byzantium and the process of evangelization began on a large scale. At first the khan had only a few supporters and met with a considerable amount of resistance from the aristocracy.[169] After a protracted struggle and through repressive measures, the rebellion was suppressed.[170] The empire in this formative period made some glaring errors, for even with the end of the rebellion, the conversion apparently did not have the effect that Boris had hoped from it. The emperor had stipulated in his treaty that the new Church of Bulgaria must be spiritually dependent upon the See of Constantinople. As a result, Bulgaria was flooded with Byzantine priests who came to organize its structure and to teach its doctrines. On the whole, Boris was willing

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[167] Ibid., p. 165.

[168] On the date of the conversion there is some disagreement. V. N. Zlatarsky, A History of the Bulgarian State in the Middle Ages (Sofia, 1918), I, Part II, 27-31 (in Bulgarian), believes it to be 865. Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire, agrees with Zlatarsky. Most modern scholars, however, now agree with the view established by Vaillant and Lascaris, op. cit., pp. 5-15, who argue for the date 864.

[169] Theophanes Continuatus, p. 164, speaks only of a few followers.

[170] Thirty-two nobles, the leaders of the rebellion, were all put to death. On this, see Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire, p. 106.

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to accept the supremacy of the Byzantine Church, but he was jealous of his own influence over the Church and disliked the leading part the Byzantines were playing in the religious affairs of his kingdom. Seeking greater independence, Boris asked the empire to give him a Patriarch. All he received was a beautifully written reply from Photius explaining the important doctrines of the Church, accompanied by a treatise on the duties of a Christian prince.[171]

While this response may have impressed the Bulgar ruler in some ways, he was astute enough to grasp that little or no concessions were forthcoming.[172] So he decided to exploit the religious quarrel between East and West in order to gain his objective. Turning to Rome, Boris approached Pope Nicholas I and asked him to send him a Patriarch and to answer a number of questions.[173] The request from the Bulgar ruler at the height of the Papacy's quarrel with Constantinople must have caused a considerable amount of rejoicing in Rome. Astutely interpreting the needs of the situation as well as the psychology of the Bulgar ruler, Nicholas lost no

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[171] Photius, Epistolae, cols. 628-96, contains the reply. This situation has been admirably analyzed by Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 91-131.

[172] Ibid., pp. 112-13.

[173] In August, 866, Boris' relative Peter, together with the ambassadors John and Martin, arrived at Rome with gifts, requesting a Patriarch. They also submitted to the Pope a list of 106 questions on which the khan desired an opinion. For the Pope's response, see Nicholas, Responsa ad Consulta Bulgarorum, ed. Migne, P.L. 119, cols. 978-1016; hereafter cited as Nicholas, Responsa. On this subject, see I. Dujcev, "Die Responsa Nicolas I. Papae ad consulta Bulgarorum als Quelle für die bulgarische Geschichte," in Festschrift zur Feier des Haus-Hof-und Staatsarchivs, I (Vienna, 1949), 349-62.

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time in acting. He sent two notable legates to Bulgaria--Formosus, Bishop of Porto, and Paul, Bishop of Populonia.[174] Then he answered the khan's questions.[175] Concerning the khan's request for a Patriarch, the Pope remained cautiously noncommital, but promised Boris a bishop and later an archbishop when the Bulgarian Church had grown larger.[176]

The acquirement of his own bishop delighted the khan, for he had gained from the Roman See that which he had been denied by the Constantinopolitan. And in the following years Boris gave every assistance that he could to the Roman clergy. Latin soon replaced Greek in the liturgy. This was followed by the building of churches and the organizing of congregations.[177] As a result of these developments it appeared that the Balkans (i.e., Illyricum), which had been lost during the iconoclastic period, would again return to Roman jurisdiction.[178] The struggle over Bulgaria was far from over, as the following developments were to show clearly.

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[174]Dvornik, The Photian Schism, p. 113.

[175]Nicholas, Responsa, cols. 978-1016.

[176]Ibid., chap. lxxii.

[177]Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire, p. 111.

[178]On the loss of Illyricum, see V. Grumel, "L'annexion de l'Illyricum oriental et de la Sicile et de la Calabre au patriarcat de Constantinople," Recherches de sciences religieuses, 40 (1952), 191-200. He argues that it occurred during the reign of Constantine V. More plausible is the internal logic of M. V. Anastos, "The Transfer of Illyricum, Calabria and Sicily to the Jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 732-33," in Sillage Bizantina in orore di S. G. Mercati (S.B.N.), 9 (1957), 14-31.

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Initially the triumph of the Roman Church was due to its more conciliatory attitude toward the Bulgar khan, but once the Roman See was assured of success, it exhibited an arrogance which blinded it to the needs of the Bulgar state. Formosus had played a key role in this early triumph of the Roman Church through his tact and ability to win the khan's trust. As a result, Boris hoped that the Patriarch whom he was to receive from Rome would be Formosus. In 867 Boris sent a request that Formosus be made at least an archbishop. Nicholas, suspicious of this request (perhaps because of the ambition of Formosus), responded that the bishop had his own flock to tend at Porto and ordered him back.[179] This flagrant disregard of his desires angered the khan. No different was the policy of Nicholas' successor, Hadrian II, who continued to deny Boris a patriarch or even an archbishop.[180]

In the course of these developments Boris realized that the Roman See had no intention of allowing him to manage his own ecclesiastical affairs. The empire, on the other hand, was quick to realize its error and was prepared to alter its position. Before Michael and Photius could achieve anything, both fell from power. The new Emperor Basil, however, had a Western policy in which the Balkans were to play an important part. To insure its success, Basil needed

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[179]Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire, pp. 111-12.

[180]Ibid., p. 113; Dvornik, Les Slaves, pp. 193ff.

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Bulgaria within the Byzantine orbit, for otherwise his Dalmatian position might be endangered. Employing the groundwork established by his predecessor, Basil acted while the deteriorating conditions between Rome and Bulgaria existed. All of the resources of Byzantine diplomacy were marshalled to detach the Bulgars from the jurisdiction of Rome. Unfortunately little information about this work has survived in the sources. Only in February, 870, during the last session of the anti-Photian Council in Constantinople, were the results of the imperial diplomacy seen, when a Bulgarian embassy arrived in the capital.[181] The ambassadors had come to ask the council, on behalf of their ruler Boris, whether the Bulgarian Church was to be subject to Rome or to Constantinople. The timing of the embassy was magnificent, for the representatives of the Eastern patriarchates were still in Constantinople. Basil, quick to realize what a momentous opportunity this presented to him, called a special conference to deal with this problem. The papal legates protested, but to no avail. They were simply excluded from the discussions.[182] Basil then moved with the same skill that he had shown in his rise to power. He marshalled the representatives of the Eastern patriarchates, who were totally subservient to imperial wishes, to declare that Bulgaria should belong to the jurisdiction of the see of Constantinople.

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[181] Mansi, op. cit., col. 158.

[182] Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 131-32.

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When they heard of this decision, the papal legates naturally protested again, arguing that the council had been officially closed and that it had no mandate to discuss such matters. Boris accepted the decision and proceeded to expel the Roman clergy from his country.[183] This time the empire showed that it had learned from its early error, for the Patriarch Ignatius now consecrated an archbishop for Bulgaria.[184] The archbishop, in turn, was given a degree of autonomy within the Byzantine Church.[185]

When the Papacy learned of these events, it protested and made various attempts throughout the next decade to undo the Byzantine success, but Bulgaria was destined to remain within the orbit of Byzantine civilization.[186] In my opinion, three factors were responsible for this Byzantine victory. First, there was the relentless work of Byzantine diplomacy. Second, the empire was more flexible than the Roman Church and saw the needs of the Bulgarian state. For instance, the Bulgarian khan was at this time trying to achieve the unification of his country and the perfection of his autocracy. To

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[183] Ibid., pp. 153-54.

[184] The name of the archbishop was probably Nicholas. This is recorded by an inscription found by Grégoire. On this, see H. Grégoire, "Une inscription datée au Nom du Roi Boris-Michel de Bulgarie," Byzantion, 14 (1939), 227-34.

[185] Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, p. 208 (n. 1).

[186] Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 154-58. Even in 880, when Basil relinquished control of Bulgaria to Rome in order to gain the Papacy's support, this really did not change the situation. For Basil knew that Bulgaria's position would remain in the Byzantine orbit.

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achieve these objectives, the model of the emperor as a supreme autocrat sanctioned by the Church was certainly more in tune with the needs of the khan than the autocracy of the Roman Pontiff, who refused to recognize his dependence on any temporal prince. This point perhaps more than any other was repeatedly used by Byzantine diplomats to convince the khan that his future lay with Byzantium. Third, the skill of Basil must not be overlooked, even though he certainly owed much to his predecessor.

Venice

Concerning the Emperor Basil's relations with Venice, little can be said. Venice in the ninth century was still very much a part of the Byzantine orbit and was considered a Byzantine province. The doges were considered Byzantine officials. And, in addition to the honorary titles of Consul, Protospatharius, and Protoedrus, they apparently received some pay from the Byzantines.[187] The above titles were only symbols of vassalage. In reality Venice in this period was expanding commercially and was virtually autonomous by 840. For in this year Venice concluded a treaty with the Emperor Lothair which ensured reciprocal freedom of commerce by land and sea.[188] In addition, it is significant that in the dates of public documents, anno Domini began to replace

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[187] On Venice, see Kretschmayr, op. cit.; Cessi, op. cit., pp. 250-64.

[188] Kretschmayr, op. cit., pp. 92ff.

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the regnal years of the emperor.[189] The fiction of vassalage, however, was retained because the benefits outweighed the drawbacks and in no way infringed on Venice's real autonomy.

Because Venice and the empire had similar goals in the Adriatic, there was a great deal of cooperation between the two states in the ninth century, especially against the Arab danger.[190] Friendly ties, therefore, were maintained and honorific titles were granted to the doges. Since the continuance of these ties was important to Basil, he maintained the policy initiated by his predecessors. In 879, he sent gifts to the Doge Ursus Parteciacus and conferred on him the title of Protospatharius. Little else of Basil's relations with Venice is known.[191]

The Kingdom of Louis the German

As has been already noted in the earlier chapters, Basil had diplomatic relations with the German Emperor Louis II. It is also apparent that he maintained friendly ties with the kingdom of Louis the German. In 871[192] and in 873,[193] for instance, embassies from Basil visited the

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[189] Lentz, op. cit., p. 112.

[190] See Chapter VI on the role of Venice against the Arabs.

[191] John of Venice, M.G.H. SS., VII, $21_{8-10,23}$ ("Domnus quidem Ursus dux effagitante Basilio imperatore eo tempore 12 campanas Constantinopolim misit.").

[192] Annales Fuldenses, 384_{30} (dated by the chronicler as 872).

[193] Ibid., 387_{23} (dated as 873).

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court of Louis at Regensburg and conferred gifts on the Western ruler. Unfortunately the reason or reasons for these embassies are unknown. From the timing of the visits, however, it appears that they were somehow connected with Basil's Balkan and Western policy. Perhaps they were simply to assure Louis that the empire's interests in these areas would in no way infringe on his rights.[194]

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[194]Compare the view of Dölger, Regesten, p. 59.

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CHAPTER IX

BASIL'S INTERNAL POLICY

Although external policies preoccupied the Emperor Basil throughout his reign, he by no means ignored the internal affairs of the state. The success or failure of his external policy was to a large degree dependent upon the skill of his internal policy.

The prime objective of Basil's internal policy was the firm establishment of his dynasty. To achieve this, however, was easier said than done, for the upstart emperor was a usurper of humble origin with little support outside of a tightly knit circle of relatives and friends who were largely of Armenian origin like himself.[1] The greatest threat to Basil's plans was the pressing urgency of a religious problem which he had inherited from his predecessor, Michael III.

The problem I am referring to is the Photian schism.[2] According to the exhaustive analysis by Dvornik, this problem was more than a religious quarrel. It had political overtones as well, although these were confused with the

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[1] On the Armenian origin of his followers, see Chapter III.

[2] The definitive work on this subject is Dvornik, The Photian Schism. Other studies which are useful are: Bury, E.R.E., pp. 180-209; Hergenröther, op. cit.; M. Jugie, Le schisme byzantin (Paris, 1941); Vogt, Basile I, pp. 202-46; J. N. Jager, Histoire de Photius et du Schisme des Grecs (Paris, 1844).

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religious and moral.[3] It was a struggle between two rival parties which aspired to monopolize the management of the Church and the empire. Dvornik has admirably illustrated that the threads of this division in Byzantine society ran through the whole skein of Byzantine history. Its origins are actually to be found in some of the institutions of old Rome which were transferred to Byzantium. Popular organizations such as the Blues, the Greens, the Reds, and the Whites were rallying points of various doctrines until the period of Heraclius (610-641).[4]

But even after Heraclius, two conflicting opinions or currents--one moderate and one reactionary--persisted. They were found again in the iconoclastic struggle of the eighth and ninth centuries. When the iconoclastic issue subsided, a new struggle followed between the moderate party, which was willing to work with the state and compromise on matters not concerning the fundamentals of faith, and an extreme party which held the Church above and beyond the state.

Throughout the ninth century these two parties contended for pre-eminence. During the reign of the Emperor Nicephorus I (802-811) the Moderates won the day, and the

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[3]Dvornik, The Photian Schism, p. 6 (n. 1).

[4]Ibid., pp. 6-8. F. Dvornik, "The Circus Parties in Byzantium. Their Evolution and Suppression," Byzantina Metabyzantina, 1 (1946), 119-33, has shown that this partisanship can be traced in the old Roman Circus factions. On this problem, see, also, the works of: G. Manojlavic (re-edited and translated by H. Grégoire, "Le Peuple de Constantinople," Byzantion, 11 (1936), 617-716; A. Dyakonov, "The Byzantine Demes and Factions in the Fifth to the Seventh Centuries," Vizantiysky Sbornik (1945), 144-227 (in Russian).

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layman Nicephorus was elevated to the Patriarchate.[5] But the Extremists rose to power, in turn, during the reign of Michael I (811-813).[6] The policy of the Extremists caused serious repercussions, leading to a revival of iconoclasm under Leo V (813-820).[7] For the next thirty years, the Extremists were reduced in importance. Nevertheless, this second revival of iconoclasm strengthened the two parties: the Extremists because of the persecution they had suffered; the Moderates because of the cultural renaissance which the last iconoclastic emperor, Theophilus (819-842), had encouraged.[8]

Thus the struggle persisted unabated down to the time of the Emperor Michael III (842-867), when it centered on a conflict between Caesar Bardas, who had restored the Moderates to power, and the Patriarch Ignatius, who was deposed because he was under the influence of the Extremists.[9]

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[5] On the Patriarchate of Nicephorus, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 31-39. The most recent study on Nicephorus is P. J. Alexander, The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople (Oxford, 1958).

[6] Bury, E.R.E., pp. 39-42.

[7] Ibid., pp. 56-76, 110-19, 135-43; Martin, op. cit.; Ostrogorsky, Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Bilderstreites.

[8] On the cultural renaissance in this period, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 434-49; Hussey, Church and Learning in the Byzantine Empire, pp. 22-36; Dvornik, Les légendes de Constantin et de Méthode vues de Byzance, pp. 39ff.

[9] Prior to the election of Ignatius as Patriarch, Methodius had incurred the hostility of the Extremists by his policy of "Oeconomia." On this subject, see V. Grumel, "La politique religieuse du Patriarch St. Méthode," Échos d'Orient, 34 (1935), 385-401; Bury, E.R.E., pp. 143-53; Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 12-18. At first Ignatius seemed like a compromise candidate, but peace was ephemeral because of his uncompromising character and politico-religious naiviete. On this, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 184-85; Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 19-23.

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Finally the Protoasekretis Photius was brought forward as a compromise candidate to replace Ignatius, but the struggle broke out with renewed ferocity when Photius attempted to exclude the Extremists from political activity.[10] Pope Nicholas I (858-867) was drawn into the struggle and sought to take advantage of it to assert papal primacy and to restore the jurisdiction of Illyricum and the patrimonies of Calabria and Sicily.[11] Legates were sent. Ignatius was duly condemned, and papal primacy was recognized as a quod pro quo.[12]

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[10]Ignatius fell from power because he was under the influence of the opposition party, and this was considered detrimental to the interests of the Church and the state. He therefore was asked to resign on the grounds of old age and public unrest. On this, see ibid., pp. 39-48. Photius, a layman, was selected because he was conisdered by the government to be a neutral candidate who might restore religious peace. The fact that he was a layman who was hurried through all the degrees of the priesthood was uncanonical but not without exception. Other examples were Paul III in 687, Tarasius in 784, and Nicephorus in 806. All were, coincidentally, laymen who occupied the position of Protoasekretis like Photius. See G. Every, The Byzantine Patriarchate (2d ed.; London, 1962).

[11]Nicholas was brought into the quarrel when the Pope was asked to send a delegation to attend a synod which would elucidate some questions relating to iconoclasm. See Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 160-75; Bury, E.R.E., p. 193. Nicholas, however, decided to employ the synod for his own ends: to affirm papal primacy and to restore papal jurisdiction over Illyricum. See Grumel, Récherches de sciences religieuses, 39-40, 191ff.; Anastos, S.B.N., 9, 14-31.

[12]The papal legates--Radoald of Porto and Zacharias of Anagni--had but one purpose: to make a careful inquiry into the disposition and censure of Ignatius and to report back. This was contrary to what the emperor wanted, but he agreed to reopen the case provided the verdict was given in Constantinople. As a result, Ignatius was condemned by the legates. In this fashion, Rome's primacy was recognized by Byzantium. Over the other matter--the jurisdiction of Illyricum--no solution was arrived at.

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This, however, left the issue of the jurisdiction of Illyricum unresolved in the Pope's eyes, and it came to a head when the newly converted khan of Bulgaria, disappointed in his attempts to obtain an autocephalous patriarchate, turned to Rome.[13] The upshot of this struggle for the Bulgarians' allegiance was the excommunication of Photius by Nicholas. Photius, in turn, called a council in the summer of 867 which condemned the Pope.[14]

Hardly was the Council of 867 over when a great transformation occurred at court. Basil the Macedonian murdered his benefactor, Michael III.[15] Outside of a circle of friends and relatives Basil could depend on little support. Since he desired to strengthen his own position and establish a

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[13]Initially Nicholas was not displeased with the results of his legates, but he still looked forward to a concession on the other point of issue by withholding his recognition of Photius. The return of Illyricum, however, was rejected by the imperial government because it was considered vital to the security of the empire, especially now that Bulgaria was on the verge of conversion. The problem was further complicated by the arrival of the Extremists in Rome (Theognostus). It was only at this time that Nicholas got a full picture of the situation in the empire. He therefore viewed his demands as modest, and in the Lateran Synod in 863 deprived Photius of his status as Patriarch. What precipitated further difficulties was the machinations of Boris, who had been recently converted (864). See Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 109-12.

[14]In the summer of 867 Photius condemned Nicholas while Louis II was acclaimed emperor at the closing meeting of the Council. This action on the part of Photius shows that he was trying to divide the West, setting the emperor against the Pope. On the relations of the Byzantines and Louis, see Bury, E.R.E., pp. 203-04, 331; Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 121-22; Gay, op. cit., pp. 80-83. On the letter to Louis II by Photius, see Grumel, Les Regestes, I, Part II, 88.

[15]Michael was murdered on September 24, 867.

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dynasty, he conceived of the Extremists as a prop. His murder of Caesar Bardas, the leader of the Moderates, must have been viewed with favor by the Extremists. Perhaps Basil opened negotiations with them shortly after the removal of the all-powerful Caesar.[16] Even if he had not, Basil's precarious position initially gave him little choice but to court the favor of the Extremists.[17] They alone were ready to condone and countenance his crime. His first objective, therefore, was to win their support.

Although Basil himself had presided over and signed the Acts of the Council of 867, one of his first acts was to ask for Photius' resignation.[18] Probably on the day after Basil's coup d'etat Photius handed in his resignation and Ignatius was reinstated on November 3, the anniversary of his first enthronement.[19] While the reinstatement of the ex-Patriarch brought him the favor of the Extremists, the emperor was still left in a delicate position, for he had compromised himself in the eyes of the papacy by attending the Council of 867. The danger to the empire's position in the West was an additional inducement. Since his Western

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[16]Dvornik, The Photian Schism, p. 136.

[17]Grégoire, in Cambridge Medieval History, IV, 151.

[18]There are two accounts of Photius' dethronement. According to Georgius Continuatus, p. 841, Photius was removed because of his opposition to Basil, to whom he refused to give communion. More preferable is Anastasius' account in Mansi, op. cit., col. 6, which simply states that he was asked to resign.

[19]Dvornik, The Photian Schism, p. 137.

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policy would have little chance of success without papal backing, Basil sought to redeem himself in the eyes of the Roman Church.

He immediately recalled the ambassador who had been sent with the Acts of the Council of 867 to Louis II. He also confiscated the Acts among the Patriarch's personal papers.[20] As soon as he was able, Basil dispatched the Spartharius Euthymius to the Pope (Nicholas was still thought to be alive; he died on November 13, 867) with a letter explaining the new turn of events.[21] The news of these developments was a welcome relief to the new Pope, Hadrian. It may even have stiffened Hadrian's determination to continue his predecessor's Eastern policy.[22] The Pope followed by sending two letters with Euthymius and Theognostos. In essence they expressed the Pontiff's satisfaction with Basil's decision to carry out Nicholas' verdict, and expressed the hope that the emperor would bring the incident to a satisfactory conclusion.[23]

Toward the end of the winter of 869, another imperial embassy arrived in Rome. Its prime objective was to entrust the whole Photian question to the discretion of the Papacy. As the Photians possessed considerable strength, Basil did

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[20] Vita Ignatii, col. 540.

[21] Dvornik, The Photian Schism, p. 138. [22] Ibid., p. 139.

[23] Dölger, Regesten, p. 58 (n. 474); Liber Pontificalis, II, 178_3; Vogt, Basile I, pp. 210-13. (The embassy was composed of Spartharius Basil, John of Silaeon, and Peter of Sardes.)

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not want to alienate them. The emperor hoped for magnanimity in the verdict.[24] Since the question had already dragged on for eighteen months, the imperial ambassadors perhaps also urged some haste.

After examining the Acts of the Council of 867, the Pope summoned a synod for June of 869. It issued five canons on the subject. They (1) condemned Photius' Acts and ordered them burned; (2) condemned the councils summoned by Photius against Ignatius; (3) anathemized Photius; (4) denounced the signatories of the Council of 867 but promised lay communion if they repented; (5) threatened excommunication of all those who refused to hand over the condemned writings. The synod followed by solemnly burning all the Acts of the Council of 867.[25]

The letters entrusted to the legates outlined the Pontiff's next move. Hadrian informed Ignatius of the sentence which had been passed against the Photians. Of Basil the Pope requested, among other things, that the emperor summon a great council to carry out the Pontiff's sentence under the leadership of his legates. A comparison of Basil's and Ignatius' letters with the Pope's answers clearly indicates that the Pontiff had gone far beyond the emperor's intentions. Basil wished to comply, for he believed that

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[24] Dvornik, The Photian Schism, p. 140.

[25] The Acts of the Council are in the Acts of the Eighth Council; Mansi, op. cit., XVI, cols. 122-31, 372-80. The burning is described in the Liber Pontificalis, II, 179.

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this was the best way to win the favor of Rome and to screen his crime behind the authority of the Roman See. What the emperor did not want was to alienate the Moderates, who represented an important group. That is why he asked for leniency.[26] Unfortunately the Papacy did not clearly understand Basil's needs. Thus the emperor's hopes proved short-lived.

The first difficulties were encountered when the delegates arrived in Constantinople. The legates insisted that all bishops who were going to attend the Council must first subscribe to a Libellus satisfactionis acknowledging the primacy of Rome. According to Dvornik, the Libellus was not particularly objectionable, but the manner in which it was forced down the throats of the Byzantines was.[27]

Further problems arose when the Council opened on October 5, 869, and the legates insisted on carrying out the Pope's instructions to the letter. For these enraged the sentiments of the Byzantines by prejudicing the case in question without giving the accused a fair hearing.[28] Under

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[26] Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 143-44.

[27] Ibid., pp. 144-45. It was made a sine qua non condition for admission to the Council.

[28] Ibid., pp. 146-47. The Pope's letter to Ignatius after the Roman synod shows this clearly. It states the following: Photius, Gregory Abestas, and those who had been consecrated by the ex-Patriarch are deposed; the clergy ordained by Ignatius, who followed Photius, may obtain pardons if they sign the Libellus satisfactionis; absolution for the signatories of the Acts of the Council of 867 is reserved to the Holy See; Ignatius is also called upon to justify himself against his enemies' accusation that he refused to receive

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these conditions, even the Ignatians realized that a victory in their favor would bring them little advantage in the eyes of their people. As a result, the early sessions of the Council were meagerly attended.[29]

Basil saw the difficulties in which Ignatius and his party had been placed. Although he was unable to act in opposition to the Pope, he did everything he could to mitigate the deplorable impression which the prejudgment had produced in Byzantium. In order to retrieve the situation, Basil made every attempt to give the Council at least a semblance of an impartial court. Therefore he endeavored to have the Pope's sentence pronounced only after a careful examination of the question. So as not to exasperate the Photian party, Basil also emphasized his readiness to find a compromise acceptable to all.

In the first session, Basil acted to achieve these ends. First the legates were called upon to present their credentials.[30] Basil departed from the Pope's order that the papal legates preside over the Council by insisting that the Eastern procedure be observed in which either the emperor

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the letter of Benedict III, by having the pontifical decision signed by all the members of the Council to be convened shortly in Constantinople.

As a result, the clergy ordained by Photius had nothing to gain by transferring their allegiance to Ignatius, as all they were promised was lay communion, and those ordained by Methodius and Ignatius, who returned to the new Patriarch, were given long and humiliating penances.

[29] Ibid., pp. 145-46.

[30] Initially the legates objected to this, but accepted when they were assured that no offense was intended to the honor of the Roman See.

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or his representative presides.[31] Finally, Basil insisted that Photius and his supporters have a hearing. The legates gave way on the first two demands, but on the last point they refused, insisting that they had not come to listen to the arguments of Photius and his associates but to carry out the sentence of the Pope.[32] The trial of Photius and his followers ended in this manner.[33]

The Church of Rome was, up to this point, on the verge of victory, but the Council was not over and the Byzantines were yet to have their turn. At the closing session of the Council in February, 870, a Bulgarian embassy reached Constantinople just in time to attend the last session.[34] It had been sent by Khan Boris, who had been angered by the Roman Pontiff, to ask the Council to which jurisdiction Bulgaria belonged--Rome or Constantinople.[35] To the Byzantines, who had been forced to accept papal dictation at the Council, this presented a wonderful opportunity to retrieve their self-esteem. Much credit must also be given to Byzantine diplomacy, which had been at work after the initial failure of 865.[36]

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[31] Baanes became the emperor's representative.

[32] Ibid., p. 149.

[33] Photius was excommunicated. Vita Ignatii, col. 545.

[34] Mansi, op. cit., col. 158.

[35] Dvornik, Les Slaves, pp. 193ff.

[36] Dvornik, The Photian Schism, p. 152, believes that problems at home may also have influenced Boris in sending this embassy.

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Basil immediately summoned a conference to discuss this matter. The representatives of the Eastern patriarchates and the Bulgarian envoys took part under his leadership. The Roman legates protested, arguing that the Council was closed and that they had no mandate to discuss this problem. Basil simply ignored their protests and banned them from the debate. Now Basil moved with great skill to decide the issue in one meeting. He decided that the conflict ought to be arbitrated by the neutral representatives of the Eastern patriarchates. Their answer was a foregone conclusion--they declared for Constantinople.[37] When the legates learned of this decision they again protested, and produced a letter from Hadrian which they were to have withheld unless Roman interests in Bulgaria were threatened. The letter informed Ignatius that Pope Hadrian had acknowledged him as the legitimate Patriarch on condition that he undertake nothing contrary to Roman interests in Bulgaria; otherwise he would be severed from communion with Rome and be excommunicated.[38] This did not change the decision, and the Roman legates left Constantinople with only a partial victory.[39] When Hadrian

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[37]Canonically, the Byzantine claim was legitimate, since Bulgaria included only a small portion of Macedonia, which had been under Roman jurisdiction, and included a large part of Thrace, which had always been under the jurisdiction of Constantinople.

[38]Ibid., pp. 151-58.

[39]On their way back the legates were intercepted by Narentene pirates, and they did not reach Rome until 870 (December).

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learned of this he protested, sending letters to Ignatius and Basil.[40] These were to no avail.

In Byzantium the Council of 869-870 had in no way eased the tension within the Eastern Church. Since the supporters of Photius continued their loyalty to their leader, one might say that there existed two churches in the empire. The return of Bulgaria to the Byzantine fold further complicated this situation, for there was now a greater need for additional clergy to carry on the work of the Church. Without the assistance of the Photian clergy, this could not be achieved.

Both the Patriarch and Basil were cognizant of this problem and attempted a solution. Both wrote to Hadrian by the middle of 871 in the hope that the Roman Pontiff would mitigate the sentence passed on the Photian clergy.[41] Hadrian refused, stating that he would not go back on Nicholas or his earlier decision.[42] It appears that Hadrian's attitude on this subject was caused by recent developments in Bulgaria, where Boris was expelling the Latin clergy.[43]

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[40]Hadrian II, Epistolae, p. 760. It was written in November, 871, and asked the emperor to order Ignatius to recall from Bulgaria the bishops sent there. A letter to Ignatius preceded this one. Ibid., p. 762.

[41]Grumel, Les Regestes, I, Part II, 98-99. The letters were delivered by Theognostas (Basil also sent one with the same demands). Dölger, Regesten, p. 59 (n. 488).

[42]Dvornik, The Photian Schism, p. 159.

[43]This is mentioned by the successor of Hadrian, John VIII, in a letter to Boris dated December 872-May 873. John VIII, Epistolae, VII, 277 ("As regards the Greek bishops and priests who are there, we shall not only depose, but excommunicate them as most of them are said to be of Photius' ordination, his associates and followers.").

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The reply of the Roman Pontiff gave Ignatius and Basil two choices--compliance or a compromise with the Photians. Since the needs of the state and Church had priority over papal favor, an understanding with the Photians was reached. From this decision one can discern that Ignatius did not share the uncompromising attitude of the Extremists in his party. This marked the first step in the Patriarch's reconciliation with Photius.

Photius until then had been harshly treated. In a letter to Basil he listed in detail a long catalogue of the sufferings undergone in his exile. Above all he laments the loss of his library.[44] A large faction of the clergy continued to maintain its loyalty to him. Some even continued to ask his advice, like Zachary of Antioch (Pisidia).[45]

To Basil this situation was exasperating and embarrassing. The stability of the throne would be threatened if the Photians persisted in their opposition. Photius followed a shrewd policy. Unlike the Extremists under Michael III, he urged loyalty to the emperor, and within a short time the wisdom of this policy was revealed. First, Basil ameliorated the ex-Patriarch's treatment.[46] Then in 872 or 873 Basil recalled him from exile and entrusted to him the education of his children, giving him an apartment in the palace.

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[44]Photius, Epistolae, letter XVI, cols. 765-72.

[45]Ibid., cols. 841-45. Photius here answers the questions asked by the Metropolitan Zachary of Antioch in Pisidia.

[46]Ibid., col. 772 (letter 17). Here Photius thanks Basil for an amelioration in his treatment.

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Perhaps he resumed his lectures at the Magnauria university.[47]

The recall of Photius was Basil's first step toward achieving unity in the Church. Some time later a reconciliation was brought about between Photius and Ignatius.[48] When the reconciliation took place is not known for certain, but Dvornik places it in the year 876.[49] He bases this date on the fact that Basil sent a letter to John VIII asking the Pope to send legates to Constantinople for a new pacification of the Byzantine Church.[50] According to Dvornik, this letter implies that Photius and Ignatius, with Basil's approval, had agreed to settle their differences.[51]

Unfortunately Ignatius did not long survive the reconciliation; he died on October 23, 877. Photius then resumed the Patriarchate. A serious complication, however, arose. In the Eastern Church, by tradition, a sentence had been passed on the Photians by a council and only another council could remove it. That is why Basil had written to John in 877 before Ignatius' death.[52]

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[47] *Vita Basilii*, 276$_7$. Another version of how Photius gained the graces of Basil is to be found in the *Vita Ignatii*, cols. 365ff.

[48] On the contradictory nature of the sources on this problem, see Dvornik, *The Photian Schism*, pp. 167-70. (The sources which state that reconciliation did take place are Photius and Leo the Wise. Those who oppose it are the *Vita Ignatii*, Stylianus, and the anti-Photian collection.)

[49] Dvornik, *The Photian Schism*, p. 170.

[50] The letter is lost. It can be reconstructed from John's reply in April, 878.

[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 171-72. [52] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

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To the Pope this request was readily welcome. John wanted above all to please the emperor, especially since he needed imperial assistance against the Arabs in Italy.[53] In addition, the Pope had hopes of solving the Bulgarian problem on the same occasion.[54] For this reason, John dispatched a letter by his legates to Ignatius (who was believed to be still alive), ordering him to withdraw his clergy from Bulgaria.[55]

When the legates, Paul and Eugene, arrived in Constantinople, they found that Ignatius had died in the interval and that Photius was again in the patriarchal chair. Remembering the experiences of Radoald and Zachary and not having any instructions in such an eventuality, the legates were hesitant to act. Basil, finding himself at another impasse, again turned to John.[56] Since imperial assistance was vital to the Pope, he responded by calling a synod. In a letter to Basil, the Pope outlined its results. John, first of all, is happy that Basil has submitted to the authority of the Roman See and notes with pleasure that Basil acknowledges this See to be the head of the whole Church. With respect to the resumption by Photius of his see without Rome's consent, the Pope is amenable, but Photius

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[53] See Chapter VI.

[54] Dvornik, The Photian Schism, p. 172.

[55] John VIII, Epistolae, VII, 62-63.

[56] V. Grumel, "Qui fut l'envoyé de Photius auprès de Jean VIII?" Échos d'Orient, 32 (1933), 439-43.

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must apologize before a synod and make amends for his previous conduct. John also releases Photius and his bishops from the ecclesiastical censures imposed on them. As a condition of these concessions, the Pope asks that Photius no longer exercise any ecclesiastical power in Bulgaria.[57] It is evident from the tone of the synod that John, while affirming his primacy, wished, nevertheless, to be conciliatory. Perhaps this was because of his plight in Italy. One must remember that by this time John had come to look upon the empire as the only salvation for Italy.[58] With respect to Bulgaria, Photius did not wish to recede from his predecessor's position.

The task of carrying out the Pope's instructions was entrusted to Peter, a Cardinal, who brought a Commonitorium on the subject. Discussions opened between the papal legates and the Byzantines when he arrived. Initially another impasse occurred. This was over the Pope's insistance that Photius apologize for his earlier conduct. On this point Photius refused, for he felt that proceedings against him were unjustified. Moreover, Photius had made peace with Ignatius before his death.[59] Realizing that another failure could ensue in which the Papacy might lose not only its chance to recover Bulgaria but also vital military aid, the legates yielded on this point. The Commonitorium of John

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[57] John VIII, Epistolae, VII, 166-87.

[58] See Chapter VI on this point.

[59] Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 174-80.

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was re-worded, but in no way was the position of the primacy of Rome altered.[60] Under these conditions the Council opened in November of 879. It proceeded to re-examine the case without the presence of Basil, whose favorite son, Constantine, had died. The nine sessions completely rehabilitated Photius, without any quid pro quo other than a recognition of Rome's primacy and an assurance from Photius that he would be only too happy to hand over Bulgaria to the Pope if the matter lay with him.[61] All that remained now was the signature of the emperor. Out of respect for his mourning, this event was postponed until March 3, 880, in the triclinium of the palace.[62]

When the papal legates returned in the summer of 880, John VIII carefully studied their reports, the Acts of the Council, and the letters from Basil and Photius. According to the Pope's reply, dated August 13, 880, it is evident that he agreed to everything that was done at the Council for the rehabilitation of Photius, even though there were

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[60] Ibid., pp. 180-89.

[61] Mansi, op. cit., XVII, col. 417:
"What your Holiness claims is only within the powers of the Emperor of the East. Were any great love for God not hampered either by imperial orders or by other canonical considerations--even the clergy under me would agree with me in this--I should be only too ready to hand over on demand not only the sees which you say once belonged to the Roman See, but even those which were never under it, as far as it would be necessary to keep your friendship."
Quoted by Dvornik, The Photian Schism, p. 190.

[62] Ibid., pp. 190-201.

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some irregularities.[63] From a letter to Basil, the same may be concluded:

> Now, after God, we thank your Serenity for having displayed such sincerity and devotion to the Church of St. Peter and our own paternity not only in words but in striking deeds; we thank you for having sent your fleet and placed it at our service for the defence of the land of St. Peter; second, because filled with divine inspiration and reverence for the Prince of the Apostles you have restored to our jurisdiction the monastery of St. Sergius which was founded in your royal city and formerly belonged by right to the Holy Roman Church; third, we thank you profoundly for having for the love of us, though it was only fair, allowed St. Peter to re-enter into possession of the Bulgarian diocese. Hence, we urge you for your own comfort in every way to help and to defend the Holy Roman Church in these critical days, so that your imperial glory may increasingly shine over the world with the help of our apostolic prayers and receive a great reward from the Almighty.[64]

From these words one can hardly doubt that John VIII was pleased with the settlement of the Council of 879-880. The letter also illustrates why the Pope was so conciliatory. He had every reason to be. First, the Byzantines accepted Roman primacy. Second, Bulgaria was acknowledged as being under Roman jurisdiction. Finally, the emperor's military assistance proved to be instrumental in preserving the security of the Roman See. Could the Pope, after securing such concessions, be anything but happy?

Only one question remains to be answered. Why did Basil relinquish all claims to Bulgaria when his predecessors fought so vehemently for it? First of all, a compromise over

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[63] John VIII, Epistolae, VII, 227-38. The entire letter is translated and analyzed by Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 205-07.

[64] John VIII, Epistolae, VII, 229-30; quoted by Dvornik, The Photian Schism, p. 209.

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Bulgaria was worked out between the two churches which was agreeable to both. This removed the danger of Frankish penetration to the very gates of Byzantium.[65] Second, Basil hoped to end the ecclesiastical quarrel in the empire with the rehabilitation of Photius. Finally, the emperor's foreign policy at this time shifted again toward the West. Perhaps this was due to the fall of Syracuse in 878. Be that as it may, Basil needed papal support for his Western policy. As a result, the empire felt that a sacrifice had to be made.

The victory of the Roman Church in Bulgaria was simply a shadow victory. As I have already noted, Boris had other plans, and they did not include the Papacy. What the Bulgar khan was in fact doing during this time was laying the groundwork for a national Bulgarian Church. Several factors had assisted him. One was the expulsion of the disciples of Saint Methodius from Moravia in 884. Boris welcomed these and offered sanctuary to them and employed them to further his goals.[66] The rapid succession of papal officeholders after the death of John VIII on December 10, 882 was as significant.[67]

The peace inaugurated by the Council of 879-880 remained. The view that there was a second Photian schism has now been shown by Dvornik's systematic study to be

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[65] Ibid., pp. 210-12. [66] Ibid., p. 215.

[67] His successors were Marinus (882-884), Hadrian III (884-885), and Stephen VI (885-891).

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unfounded.[68] One learns from a letter of Stephen VI to Theodosius of Oria that his predecessor, Hadrian III, maintained cordial relations with Constantinople.[69] Stephen himself never departed from his predecessor's policy of friendship. As a matter of fact, like John VIII earlier, Stephen depended on Byzantium to protect Rome against the inroads of the Arabs, who had recaptured Agropolis and Garigoano.[70]

A fundamental aim of Basil's religious policy from the very beginning of his reign had been to establish closer relations with the Roman See. As I have already noted, three factors influenced him in pursuing this course. One was to screen his crime and enable him to establish himself on a secure footing. Another was to restore harmony within the realm. Finally, he needed papal support in order to enable him to carry out his Western policy.

Rome was not the emperor's only religious concern. As with many of his predecessors (Justinian I, Heraclius, Leo III, and Michael III), missionary activities were an important aspect of his religious policy and were carried

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[68] F. Dvornik, "Le second schisme de Photios," Byzantion, 8 (1933), 425-74; Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 202-36. He shows that the basis for a second schism is based on an anti-Photian collection.

[69] John VIII, Epistolae, VII, p. 334:
"We have learned from the reports of the faithful how our predecessor Hadrian sent you once to Constantinople as ambassador to the pious Emperor and received from him not only the pension that was due to your merits, but also other gifts which he sent to our church and to others of the faithful."

[70] Gay, op. cit., pp. 129, 137ff.

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out with a fervent zeal.[71] One might stretch a point and view the Paulician wars in this light. According to his grandson's biography, the emperor's pious endeavor involved the conversion of the Bulgars, Russians, and Jews.[72] On the whole this statement must be considered a mere rhetorical embellishment designed to glorify the founder of the Macedonian dynasty. As has already been noted, the conversion of Bulgaria was initiated by Michael III. Credit to Basil in this area can be given only if it is conceded that the Bulgars were not firmly established in the faith when he ascended the throne. He left a situation in Russia little different from that which he had inherited. Once again Basil cannot be considered an initiator, but only a continuator. In Russia the conversion of these people did not occur until Basil II's reign.[73]

Little different was his policy with the Jews. As a matter of fact, since the seventh century these people had been periodically persecuted.[74] Heraclius and Leo III, for example, had previously made all-out attempts to convert the

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[71] Justinian I, for example, brought Christianity to the Blemyes and Nabodae. Heraclius and Leo III made attempts to convert the Jews. Michael III initiated the Moravian mission, sent Constantine-Cyril to Khazaria, and converted Boris, the Bulgar khan.

[72] Vita Basilii, pp. 341-43.

[73] The conversion of Russia followed the conversion of Vladimir in 988 or 989.

[74] J. Starr, The Jews in the Byzantine Empire 641-1204 (Athens, 1939), pp. 1-7; R. Janin, "Les juifs dans l'empire byzantin," Echos d'Orient, 15 (1912), 126-33.

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Jews in the empire. Following in their footsteps, Basil made a similar attempt. From all apparent indications his methods were persuasive in nature initially.[75] His grandson, for instance, states that he at first summoned Jews to come to a disputation in which they were to justify their faith. To those who converted, Basil gave various material rewards: exemptions from taxes, and high offices.[76] This is corroborated by the Jewish chronicler Ahimaas, who relates that Basil personally brought a Jew called Shefatiah to Constantinople, where he tried by various means to entice Shefatiah to renounce his faith.[77]

This policy of peaceful persuasion apparently did not succeed.[78] Thus the emperor resorted to the secular arm. When the actual persecution began is difficult to determine

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[75] Vita Basilii, 341_{8}-342_{6}; Georgius Continuatus, 841_{12-16}; Pseudo-Symeon, 691_{8-10}.

[76] Vita Basilii, 341_{8}-342_{6}.

[77] Ahimaas, pp. 69-73:

> "There they delivered a letter, sealed with the king's seal, a chrysobull, which the king had sent to R. Shefatiah. Now these are the words of the letter inscribed therein: 'I, King Basil, send this to you that you may be brought as my guest. Come and do not decline to do so, for having heard of your wisdom and your vast learning, I have a strong desire to see you. I swear by my life and the crown on my head that peace will attend your arrival and return homeward. I will receive you with honor as I would a kinsman, and any one request that you may make of me, I will most affectionately grant."

This chronicler also records that the Bishop of Oria made an attempt to convert his brother (Shefatiah). Ibid., pp. 78-80.

[78] Starr, The Jews in the Byzantine Empire, p. 131, mentions a source in which Basil is said to have compelled more than 100 communities to be converted, by crushing the inhabitants on the olive press. Another source (Auxilius und Vulgarius, ed. E. Drümmler [Leipzig, 1866], p. 106) says, "The Emperor Basil ordered many Jews to be baptized by force."

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because of the contradictory nature of the sources. The Jewish chronicler Ahimaas states that it began in 868 (or 800 years after the fall of Jerusalem).[79] This date appears suspicious because it marks the 800th year of the fall of Jerusalem.[80] The Greek sources place it in the seventh and eighth regnal years.[81]

How extensive or violent the persecution was is difficult to say. On the basis of the Jewish chronicler Ahimaas, one can infer that it was not simply local in nature but enforced throughout the empire. How successful Basil was is also difficult to determine. Some apparently converted, but Constantine's statement probably expresses the real truth:

> After the death of the Emperor, most of them returned like dogs to their own vomit. But even if they, or rather some of them, remained as immutable as Ethiopians, nevertheless the pious Emperor must have received from God full reward for his feat because of its difficulty.[82]

Basil extended his missionary activities in other areas. After reinstating the imperial power in Dalmatia, for instance, one of the first steps which he undertook was the

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[79] Ahimaas, p. 69; Dölger, Regesten, I, Part I, 58 (n. 479): "In the 800th year after the destruction of the holy city and the temple [868] there arose a king named Basil, who tried to turn them from the Torah, and to convert them to worthless religion. He sent couriers and horsemen throughout his realm to turn the Jews from their faith and to convert them to the vanity."

[80] Starr, The Jews in the Byzantine Empire, p. 5.

[81] Cambridge Chronicle (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 100) gave it as the seventh year and seventh indiction (6382). This equals 874. Pseudo-Symeon, 691_{8-9}, says in his seventh and eighth years (867 + 7 or 8 = 874 or 875). These two sources therefore agree.

[82] Vita Basilii, 342_{1-6}.

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diffusion of Christianity among the Slavic tribes in the region.[83] According to Constantine this took place in the following manner:

> But in the time of Basil, the Christ-loving emperor, they sent diplomatic agents, begging and praying him that those of them who were unbaptized might receive baptism and that they might be, as they had been originally, subject to the Empire of the Romans; and that glorious emperor, of blessed memory, gave ear to them and sent out an imperial agent and priests with him and baptized all of them that were unbaptized of the aforesaid nations.[84]

From the above account, it would appear that the Slavs themselves took the first step in their own conversion. In the light of developments in the Balkans, especially the growth of Frankish power, this appears highly unlikely. Basil, like his predecessors, was interested, above all, in the security of the empire's position in the Balkans. That is why the empire also tried briefly to extend its power into Dalmatian Croatia by fostering a coup d'etat against Domagoj, a pro-Frankish prince.[85]

From his newly won position in Dalmatia, the emperor also took the initiative in extending the empire's influence among the nation of the Serbs through Christianity.[86] Basil

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[83] Dvornik, Les Slaves, pp. 216-80.

[84] De administrando imperio, 126_{77-78}; Vita Basilii, 291_{20}-292_{4}; Leo the Wise, Tactika, col. 969.

[85] Dvornik, The Slavs, pp. 122-23; Dvornik, Les Slaves, pp. 225-27. The empire made two attempts, one in 874 and then in 878. It gave support to the pro-Byzantine Zdeslav (who had earlier taken refuge in Byzantium) against the son and successor of Domagoj.

[86] Vita Basilii, 292_{9}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, 220_{9}; De administrando imperio, 126_{70-78}; Dölger, Regesten, p. 58 (n. 476).

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was perhaps motivated in this endeavor by the valiant defense of this kingdom against the aggression of the Bulgars earlier. A pro-Byzantine Serbia, therefore, would serve as an excellent counterpoise to the Bulgars (and to the Franks if the occasion arose). Perhaps it was Serbia that was employed as a base to pull off the diplomatic coup which brought Bulgaria back into the Byzantine fold.[87]

In the Peloponnesus, Basil carried out similar missionary activities among the Slavic tribes. In this endeavor, like many others, Basil was merely continuing the work of a long line of predecessors, beginning with Nicephorus I.[88] Under Michael III's reign, further success had been achieved by Theoctistus Bryennius. According to Constantine, Theoctistus employed troops from the themes of Thrace and Macedonia to reduce the Slavic tribes in this area and make them subjects. With two tribes he made special terms. They were the Milings who lived on Mt. Taygetus and the Ezerites who lived near Helos in Laconia.[89] Under Basil the process of Christianization was initiated.[90]

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[87] G. S. Radojicic, "La date de la conversion des Serbes," Byzantion, 22 (1952), 253-56. He places it between 868-874.

[88] Bury, E.R.E., pp. 375-81; P. Charanis, "Nicephorus I, the Savior of Greece from the Slavs (810 A.D.)," Byzantina Metabyzantina, 1 (1946), 75-92.

[89] De administrando imperio, pp. 232-36; Bon, op. cit., p. 63. (They paid tribute to the empire--the Ezerites 60 nomismata and the Milings 300.)

[90] De administrando imperio, 236_{70-82}. According to Constantine, the inhabitants of Maina who still were pagans were also baptized at the time by Basil.

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Outside of the realm of religion, Basil's internal policy was also concerned in Roman law. The emperor's interest in this aspect of Byzantine civilization was in part due to the cultural upsurge which had begun under his predecessor through the work of Theoctistus and Caesar Bardas. It was also part of the emperor's determination to implement the Roman imperial idea. It was Basil's opinion, like Justinian's earlier, that an emperor must be not only glorified with arms, but also with laws.[91] Basil therefore conceived the plan of making the legislation of Justinian more accessible by removing from it the clauses that had become obsolete and by adding supplements from the new laws. The great work that Basil intended, called the "Purification of the Old Law," was never published, but it formed the basis of Leo VI's Basilica. Two smaller books of law which Basil made as an introduction to his work have survived. The first is the Procheiron, which was apparently published between the years 870-879, for it names the Emperors Basil, Constantine, and Leo.[92] This work was a textbook for practical use and was arranged under forty titles.[93] The other, Epanagoge, was compiled in

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[91]On the subject, see K. E. Zachariae von Lingenthal, Geschichte des griechisch-römischen Rechts (3rd ed.; Berlin, 1892); Vogt, Basile I, pp. 126-39.

[92]The work was designed to produce a practical law book which would meet the needs of judges. Instead of relying on the Institutes of Justinian, however, it was greatly indebted to the Ecloga of Leo III.

[93]Zachariae von Lingenthal, op. cit., p. 22.

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the names of the Emperors Basil, Leo, and Alexander. This work was planned as an introduction to the projected great collection of laws and belongs to the period after 879.[94]

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[94] Ibid.; Vogt, Basile I, p. 135. According to these sources this work was never published. Opposed to this view is G. Vernadsky, "The Tactics of Leo the Wise and the Epanagoge," Byzantion, 6 (1931), 333-35. On the role of Photius in this work, see J. Scharf, "Photius und die Epanagoge," B.Z., 49 (1956), 385-400.

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CHAPTER X

THE CONCLUSION: THE DEATH OF BASIL AND HIS PLACE IN HISTORY

The last years of Basil's reign were wearisome. A hagiographical source even refers to him as of old age.[1] Although, as I have already noted, this statement must be viewed with caution, it does perhaps reflect the truth about the emperor's health. The task of ruling the empire had not been an easy one, and was at times filled with bitter disappointments. This, however, was the price Basil had to pay for his unquenchable ambition. If he had had a chance to relive his life, he probably would have lived it in much the same way. His greatest disappointment in life was the death of his son Constantine, his firstborn. All of Basil's love and fatherly affection had been centered on this son, and he made no attempt to conceal this.

From the very beginning one can see that Basil had marked Constantine as his successor. He made him co-emperor in 869.[2] When his son was old enough to participate in military campaigns, Basil took him along.[3] It was Constantine who celebrated with his father the great triumph following

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[1] Vita Theophano, Chs 18, 20.

[2] Jenkins, D.O.P., 19, 96-103.

[3] Vita Basilii, 278_{15-16}; Scylitzes-Cedrenus, II, 213_{13-14} (in the spring of 879 Basil and Constantine set out to the East).

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his victory over the Paulicians.[4] When a marriage alliance was suggested between the two empires, it was Constantine who was intended to marry Louis II's daughter.[5] It is clear that Basil built all of his hopes for the continuance of his dynasty on this young prince, but on September 3, 879, fate intervened. Constantine died suddenly. He was not yet twenty.[6]

Basil apparently never completely recovered from this shock. Totally isolating himself for months after Constantine's death, he even made the papal legates come to his palace to get his signature ending the Eighth Council in March, 880.[7]

Basil nevertheless was fortunate, for he had three other sons: Leo, who was born in 866;[8] Stephen, born in 867;[9] and Alexander, born in 870.[10] Since Leo was now the eldest, one might have assumed that Basil would have simply transferred his love to this son. Strangely, however, a hostility existed between Basil and his son Leo. According

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[4]Vasiliev, Vizantija i Araby, p. 35.

[5]See Chapter VI

[6]The date of the death of Constantine has now been established: Halkin, Byzantion, 24 (1954), 14-17.

[7]See Chapter IX

[8]According to Symeon the Logothete, Leo was the son of Endocia and Michael. This has now been rejected: N. Adontz, "L'Oraison funèbre de Basile I," Byzantion, 8 (1933), 508ff.

[9]See Jenkins, D.O.P., 19, 99.

[10]He was born on Thursday, November 23, 870. See Adontz, Byzantion, 8, 506.

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to Symeon the Logothete, Leo was not Basil's son but that of Michael and Endocia.[11] Some scholars, therefore, have attributed Basil's hostility toward Leo to the fact that the emperor believed his son to be really Michael's. The research of Adontz has shown this to be invalid.[12] Therefore, another cause for this hostility must be sought. Perhaps the generation gap or the educational upbringing of Leo was a factor. A boy educated by Photius would perhaps conflict inevitably with his uneducated father. Another factor which may be considered is that Basil touched his son in a place where a young man of Leo's age would feel most sensitive. It was well known that Leo was extremely fond of Stylianus Zaoutzes' daughter Zoe.[13] Yet Basil forced Leo to marry, against his will, Theophano of the Martiniakiri family.[14] This marriage turned out to be an unhappy one, for Leo continued his relationship with Zoe. Perhaps a personality conflict between Leo and his wife resulted in this incompatibility. Be that as it may, Theophano took the matter to Basil rather than confront her husband with the problem. The emperor was enraged. Not only did he reproach his son, but he tried to end the relationship once and for

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[11] Georgius Continuatus, 835_{4-6}. (According to him, Leo was born on September 1, 866.)

[12] Adontz, Byzantion, 8, 508.

[13] Vita Euthymii, ed. de Boor, p. 20.

[14] Georgius Continuatus, 846_{7-9}.

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all by marrying off Zoe against her will to Theodore Guzuniates.[15]

This incident more than any other, perhaps, enraged Leo, who was too young to understand his father's reasons.[16] The Extremetists, who had been out of power since the rehabilitation of Photius, welcomed this as an opportunity to regain their position. It is quite apparent that they exploited this situation by approaching Leo.[17] Foolishly the boy became embroiled in a plot against his father. The Moderates' position depended on Basil. Unlike Basil, they must have been astute enough to realize this, and kept an eye on the young prince. As a result, the plot came to the attention of Theodore Santabarenus, the Metropolitan of Euchaita, and an associate of Photius. Since it was difficult to accuse a prince of the royal line of a conspiracy, a scheme was concocted to implicate Leo in such a way that he would be accused of treason.[18] When they had all the necessary evidence, they went to Basil, who acted immediately. Enraged that his son would stoop to such a level, he had Leo imprisoned in the triclinium of the Margarita and

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[15] Vita Euthymii, ed. de Boor, pp. 156ff. (He relates the details of the relations between Theophano and Zoe.)

[16] It must be remembered that Basil was a usurper. By marrying his son to the Martiniakiri, the emperor would have further strengthened his dynasty.

[17] Dvornik, The Photian Schism, pp. 241-43; Vita Basilii, pp. 348-51.

[18] Georgius Continuatus, 846_{10}-847_{9}; Pseudo-Symeon, 697_{3}-699_{9}.

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almost blinded him. The Moderates, however, did not want such an atrocity on their conscience, so they intervened on the young prince's behalf and saved his eyesight.[19] Others who were associates of Leo were cross-examined and banished. The most prominent among these were Andrew the Scythian, the Domestic of the School, Stephen the Magister, and the Protovestarius Nicetas Helladicus.[20]

One can reconstruct the actual date of the conspiracy by employing the accounts of Symeon the Logothete and Tabarī. According to the former, after the arrest of Leo, Andrew the Scythian was recalled from the East, for he was a partisan of Leo.[21] If one then supplements this with Tabarī's account, one learns that following this incident the Byzantines were defeated near Tarsus on September 14, 883.[22] On the basis of these two sources one can, therefore, conclude that the plot must have occurred in the summer of 883.

Basil remained for a long time unforgiving. According to Symeon the Logothete, however, Leo's imprisonment lasted only three months.[23] This statement presents insuperable difficulties, for it is known that he was released on Saint Elias' Day (i.e., July 20). Since July 20 is almost a year

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[19]Photius and members of the Senate intervened; Pseudo-Symeon, p. 697.

[20]Ibid.; Georgius Continuatus, pp. 846-47.

[21]Ibid., 847_{10-14}.

[22]Tabarī (Vasiliev, Extracts, II, 2, 9).

[23]Georgius Continuatus, p. 847 (μῆνας Τρεῖς).

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after the arrest of Leo, the account of Symeon the Logothete is suspect. Constantine, in his biography of his grandfather, also states that his father (Leo) was imprisoned for a long time.[24] Since the expression "long time" is not appropriate for three months, there must be an error somewhere. According to Jenkins a fourteenth-century source, Nicephorus Gregoras, mentions a three-year incarceration. This led Jenkins to re-examine the case. As a result of an examination of Vindobon hist. gr. 37, he confirms this later source.[25] Leo, therefore, was imprisoned in the late summer of 883 and remained there until July 20, 886.[26]

In the same year that Leo was released, another conspiracy was formed against Basil.[27] According to Symeon the Logothete, it was led by the Domestic of the Schools, John Corcoa, who had the support of sixty-six senators and many high officials. Among those who are mentioned by Symeon are Michael Catoudares, the Comes of the Foederati, Myxaris, and Babutzicus.[28] The plot, however, was discovered and the conspirators revealed that a monk of the Church of the Blachernae was responsible for the plot. If this is true, one may see in this conspiracy another attempt by the Extremists to regain power.

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[24] Vita Basilii, 350_{15-16}. [25] Jenkins, D.O.P., 19, 102.

[26] Contrary to this is A. Vogt, "La Jeunesse de Léon VI le Sage," Revue historique, 174 (1934), 420-23; Dvornik, The Photian Schism, p. 244.

[27] Georgius Continuatus, 847_{15}-848_{6}; Pseudo-Symeon, 699_{9-15}.

[28] Ibid.

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Since Leo was in no way implicated in this conspiracy, Basil may have reconsidered the long imprisonment of his son.[29] On the feast of Saint Elias Leo was recalled to the capital. The reconciliation between Basil and his son was short, for within a month Basil died from a hunting accident. According to the Vita Euthymii, his death occurred in the following manner:

> It was August and the emperor Basil had gone out for the hunting into Thrace, to the neighborhood of Apameia and Melitias. When, finding a herd of deer, he gave chase, with the Senate and the huntsmen. They were all scattered in every direction in pursuit, when the emperor spurred after the leader of the herd, whose size and sleekness made him conspicuous. He was giving chase alone, for his companions were tired; but the stag, seeing him isolated, turned in his flight, and charged, trying to gore him; he threw his spear, but the stag's antlers were in the way, and it glanced off useless to the ground. The emperor now, finding himself helpless, took to flight; but the deer, pursuing, struck at him with its antlers, with the result that it carried him off. For the tips of the antlers having slipped under his belt, the stag lifted him from his horse and bore him away, and no one knew this had happened, till they saw the horse riderless. Then Stylianus called Zaoutzes, and Procopius the Protovestarius showed them all what had happened. They all began running hither and thither, and just managed to catch a glimpse of the object of their search, carried aloft by the beast. They gave chase with all speed but without success; for the stag, when they were well out-distanced, stood panting and breathing hard, but when a rush brought them nearer, straightway bounded off to a good distance. So they were at a loss, till some of the Bodyguard, as it is called, cut off the stag in front before it was aware, and, scattering circle-wise in the mountains, put the stag up again by shouting. Then one of the Farghanese, managing to ride alongside the deer with a naked sword in his hand, cut the horn-entangled belt through. The emperor fell to the ground unconscious. When he returned to himself he ordered the man who had delivered him from danger to be arrested, and ordered the cause of such insolence to be investigated. "For," said he, "it was to

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[29] Dvornik, The Photian Schism, p. 244.

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> kill me, not to save me, that he stretched out his sword." And he ordered the distance from the place where he was taken to Katasyrtai, where he fell off, to be measured, and they found, allowing for the turnings and windings of the animal's course, that it was sixteen miles. And having failed, even then, to gain possession of the deer, or even to inflict the least blow, they took up the stricken emperor and carrying him returned to the palace. After suffering severe internal pains, to which was added haemorrhage of the stomach, nine days later he paid our common debt, after a reign of nineteen years, leaving the scepter to his sons, Leo and Alexander his brother, however unbrotherly disposed. Stephan, the youngest, had already been ordained deacon and received the rank of Syncellus. However, it was Stylianos, called Zaoutzes in the Armenian dialect, seeing he was a Macedonian of Armenian descent like himself, whom he left in charge committing to him the direction of all matters ecclesiastical and political. And Basil's last words to his sons and Stylianos were: Alas! Alas! The conjurer Santabarenos, with his spells and his witchcraft, how did he draw me away from God, and trick me with his lies and deceits, putting me out of my right mind, and if the Lord had not come to my help, he had nearly carried me off to damnation like his own.[30]

From the description in the Vita Euthymii, one might even say that the circumstances seem incredible. Vogt[31] and Jenkins[32] have even suggested that in reality Basil was murdered by Leo and his friends because the old man had outlived his usefulness. Strange as the circumstances may be, there is no evidence to support this theory. Unless some new materials are brought to light, the hunting accident must be viewed as the only cause of Basil's death.

The death of Basil in 886 removed from the empire an energetic and able sovereign who had worked earnestly and

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[30] Vita Euthymii, Byzantion, 25-27, 8-11. (I have used Karlin-Hayter's translation here.)

[31] Vogt, Basile I, pp. 153ff.; Vogt, Revue historique, 174, 417 ff.

[32] Jenkins, Byzantium: The Imperial Centuries, pp. 196-97.

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untiringly in its behalf. Initially he hardly appeared to be a likely candidate to lead the Byzantines' state to a position of greatness. For outside of his insatiable ambition, physical prowess, and mastery of the machinations of court intrigue, he had few talents.

His position as Emperor of the Romans he owed to the brutal murder of his friend and benefactor, Michael III. Nonetheless, as emperor he exhibited a genuine drive to pursue the attributes of an "ideal Roman Emperor." Thus he endeavored to modernize the administration and law as well as to protect, harmonize, and spread the faith. But it was in the realm of foreign policy that he made his greatest contribution. It was here, above all, that Basil exhibited great initiative, and he was, on the whole, successful. One must realize that Basil should not be given exclusive credit. Under the Amorian dynasty a new breed of men emerged: Theoctistus, the restorer of the Byzantine fleet; Petronas, the victor of Pason; and Caesar Bardas, the architect of the empire's offensive against the Arabs. Basil should be given credit for recognizing the wisdom of past policies and continuing them.

At first Basil made some glaring errors, such as pursuing a Western policy before the Eastern frontier was secure. This was due to his inexperience. Basil quickly learned from his mistakes and deployed the limited resources of the empire with remarkable skill. In the East, he solved the Paulician problem. In this Basil continued the work

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which the Amorians had begun in the Pontic region. In his other campaigns along the Eastern frontier, his major objective was to gain control of all the major road junctions in eastern Asia Minor. From this plan he never deviated. In his campaigns in the South, for instance, he successfully sealed off Lycaonia and Cappadocia from Arab attack. In his campaigns against Adata, Germaniceia, and Melitene, his objective was unchanged also; but here he was only partially successful, in that he gained control of the passes and roads but could neither take these fortresses nor advance the frontier to the western bank of the Euphrates.

In view of all of these achievements in the East, Basil's work must be considered a success. If one reviews the spectacular successes of Byzantine arms during the time of his successors, the middle Macedonians, one can observe to what degree the achievements of Basil laid the foundations.

Basil's success in the West was of similar importance. The emperor found a deteriorating situation, with the Arabs virtually masters of Sicily and southern Italy and even threatening Dalmatia, endeavoring to encircle the empire. In some ways Basil again owed much to the Amorians, for by extending the theme system into the Balkans they stabilized the situation in this area and made possible Basil's offensive. To Basil must be given the credit for continuing this work. He regained Dalmatia and barred the Arabs from Italy forever. Toward the end of his reign he even began to intervene in Sicily, but death cut his work short.

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Representation 1

Representation 2

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Representation 12

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.H.R.	American Historical Review (New York and London, 1895--).
Amari, Storia	Amari, M., Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia.
Amari, Versione	Amari, M., Bibliotheca arabo-sicula, Versione italiana.
Anderson, "Campaigns"	Anderson, J. C. G., "The Campaigns of Basil I against the Paulicians in 872 A.D."
Anderson, "Road System"	Anderson, J. C. G., "The Road System of Eastern Asia Minor with the Evidence of Byzantine Campaigns."
B.H.G.	Halkin, F., Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca.
B.Ng.Jb.	Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher (Berlin, 1920-1925; at intervals Athens, 1926--).
Bury, E.R.E.	Bury, J. B., The History of the Eastern Roman Empire.
Bury, I.A.S.	Bury, J. B., The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century.
Bury, "Naval Policy"	Bury, J. B., "The Naval Policy of the Roman Empire in Relation to the Western Provinces from the 7th to the 9th Century."
B.Z.	Byzantinische Zeitschrift (Leipzig, 1892--).
CSHB	Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae (Bonn, 1828-1897).
D.A.I. Commentary	Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio, edited by G. Moravcsik, R. J. H. Jenkins et al.

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Dölger, Regesten	Dölger, F., Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches.
D.O.P.	Dumbarton Oaks Papers (Cambridge, Mass., 1941--).
Dvornik, Les Slaves	Dvornik, F., Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome au IX^{e} siècle.
Dvornik, The Slavs	Dvornik, F., The Slavs: Their Early History and Civilization.
E.C.Q.	Eastern Churches Quarterly (Ramsgate, 1936).
E.E.B.S.	Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν σπουδῶν. (Athens, 1924--).
E.H.R.	English Historical Review (London, 1886--).
F.H.G.	Müller, C., Fragmenta historicorum graecorum.
Grumel, Les Regestes	Grumel, V., Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople.
Guilland, Institutions	Guilland, R., Recherches sur les Institutions byzantines.
Hartmann, Geschichte	Hartmann, L. M., Geschichte Italiens im Mittelalter.
Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze	Honigmann, E., Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches.
Jaffé	Jaffé, P, et al., Regesta Pontificum Romanorum.
J.H.S.	Journal of Hellenic Studies (London, 1880--).
J.R.A.S.	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain (London, 1833--).
LCL	Loeb Classical Library.
Le Strange, Eastern Caliphate	Le Strange, G., The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate.
Mansi	Mansi, J. D., Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio.

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M.G.H.	Monumenta Germaniae historia.
Migne, P.G.	Migne, J. P., Patrologia Graeca.
Migne, P.L.	Migne, J. P., Patrologia Latina.
Muratori, R.I.S.	Muratori, L. A., Rerum Italicarum scriptores.
Ramsay, Historical Geography	Ramsay, W., The Historical Geography of Asia Minor.
R.E.B.	Revue des études byzantines (Bucharest and Paris, 1946--).
S.B.N.	Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici.
Schlumberger, Nicéphorus Phocas	Schlumberger, G., Un empereur byzantin au X^{e} siècle: Nicéphore Phocas.
Vasiliev, Extracts	Vasiliev, A. A., Byzance et les Arabes: Extracts I and II.
Vasiliev, Russian Attack	Vasiliev, A. A., The Russian Attack on Constantinople in 860.
Vogt, Basile I	Vogt, A., Basile I, empereur de Byzance et la civilisation byzantine à la fin du IX^{e} siècle.
V.V.	Vizantijskij Vremennik, old series 1-25 (St. Petersburg, 1894-1928); new series 1-- (Leningrad, 1947--).
Z.D.M.G.	Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gelleschaft (Leipzig, 1846--).
Z.M.N.P.	Zurnal ministerstva narodnago prosvesceni ja (St. Petersburg, 1834--).

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